



Written by [John Stossel](#) on June 5, 2024

Freedom Under Trump

Donald Trump recently spoke at the Libertarian National Convention.

Good for him. It's encouraging that he reached out to those of us who often disagree with him.

We libertarians put individual liberty first. We think government that governs least governs best.

That's a reason we fear today's Democrats. In their eagerness to tax and regulate, while throwing newly printed money at a thousand special interests, we fear they will destroy our future.



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So, Trump won applause saying, "I have been indicted by the government on 91 different things. If I wasn't a libertarian before, I sure as hell am a libertarian now!"

Trump promised to "put a libertarian in my cabinet."

He said he'd commute the jail sentence of Ross Ulbricht, the entrepreneur who created Silk Road, an underground website that lets consenting adults buy things that most government officials don't like.

Trump told the libertarians, "Our goal will be nothing less than the rebirth of fair equal and impartial justice under the Constitutional rule of law."

Libertarians should like that. But when Trump spoke, he was mostly booed. Why?

Trump did do some pro-freedom things as president. He cut a few regulations (though not as many as he promised,) withdrew from the Paris Climate Accord and appointed Supreme Court judges who might keep government in check.

He told the convention, "We must fight for the same fundamental freedoms, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of the right to own a firearm."

Libertarians complain that Trump didn't keep his promise to "bring our soldiers back home." But at least, unlike most recent presidents, he didn't begin *new* wars.

So again, why did libertarians boo?

Because much of Trump's agenda is authoritarian.

Libertarians want a humble, restrained government that keeps the peace while respecting individual rights. We want a government that does less, better.

Trump, despite throwing us a few rhetorical bones, is anything but "humble." No one knows what he might do next.

Trump criticized President Joe Biden's use of executive powers, but as president, Trump ignored those limits when he wanted to build a border wall without congressional approval and when he fired an inspector general investigating his administration.



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Trump demonstrates ignorance of the benefits of economic freedom. He bragged about helping politically connected businesses by imposing fat tariffs. Now he wants more, promising “stiff penalties on China and all other nations as they abuse us.”

“Screw us, and we screw you,” he smugly said.

But China selling us cheap stuff doesn’t screw us. It helps us.

Yes, Chinese subsidies destroy some American jobs when companies can’t compete with subsidized imports.

But the imports lower prices so much they create *more* jobs, thousands more. Trump’s tariffs hurt *Americans*, not just the other side.

Sadly, Biden has now *increased* Trump’s tariffs. And Trump wants to raise them still more?

America’s biggest problem may be the future of our retirement funds.

The Libertarian Party platform, wisely, points out that both Medicare and Social Security are unsustainable. They propose: “transition to a private voluntary system.”

That would be better. Retirees should decide for themselves how their pension money is invested. And your retirement funds would belong to you — not the government.

But tough-guy Trump, like most politicians, is a coward when it comes to admitting that Social Security and Medicare are bankrupt.

As president, he made the problem worse. He nearly doubled American spending, added almost 2 million jobs to the federal workforce.

Finally, Trump doesn’t care about free speech unless it’s his.

Recently, Trump said that he’d terminate visas of pro-Palestinian sympathizers, shouting, “Get them the hell out of our country.”

That appeals to some Americans, but as my new video explains, free speech is a wonderful thing. As long as people don’t directly incite violence, it’s important to allow people to say hateful things. Censorship creates *more* hate. It’s anti-freedom.

America needs a president who understands and cares about such things.

That’s why Libertarians and libertarians (like me) mostly booed Donald Trump.

Not that Joe Biden would do better.

Most likely, he would do worse.

He didn’t dare even show up at the convention.

Every Tuesday at [JohnStossel.com](https://www.johnstossel.com), Stossel posts a new video about the battle between government and freedom.

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