



Lauding Libertarianism: An Interview With Jacob Hornberger

In 1989, Hornberger founded the Future of Freedom Foundation. He is a regular writer for the foundation's publication, *Freedom Daily*. Fluent in Spanish and conversant in Italian, he has delivered speeches and engaged in debates and discussions about free-market principles with groups all over the United States, as well as Canada, England, Europe, and Latin America, including Brazil, Cuba, Bolivia, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Argentina.



He has also advanced freedom and free markets on talk-radio stations all across the country, as well as on Fox News' *Neil Cavuto* and *Greta van Susteren* shows. Most recently, he has regularly appeared as a commentator on the Internet show *Freedom Watch* of Fox News' legal commentator Judge Andrew Napolitano. He was interviewed by William F. Jasper at the LibertyPAC conference in Reno, Nevada, on September 15, 2011, at the video recording booth of Liberty News Network and The John Birch Society.

The New American: *We're pleased to be here at LibertyPAC in Reno, Nevada, for the 2011 conference, and very glad to have Jacob Hornberger with us today. First of all, what is the Future of Freedom Foundation?*

Jacob Hornberger: We are a libertarian educational foundation and our mission is to present an uncompromising case for the libertarian philosophy, or individual liberty, free markets, and limited government. What we do is take the burning issues of the day and analyze those issues in the context of libertarian principles so that people can see that, hey, there really is a practical side to a particular economic or political philosophy known as libertarianism.

TNA: *You are referring to libertarianism with a small "l," not directly related to the Libertarian Party, but as a libertarian philosophy, correct? And you find this philosophy consistent with the Founding Fathers and with our founding document, the Constitution?*

Hornberger: Absolutely ... we're in the ideas business, trying to move America to a better road that's consistent with the vision of the Founding Fathers, that expounds on the principles of the Declaration of Independence, that takes the principles of the Constitution and tries to build on those in terms of where we've gone wrong in this country, with socialism, imperialism, the interventionism, and show Americans



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that the way to get back on this road is you go back to these founding principles and you apply them in terms of what's going on today. That's what we're doing.

TNA: *You write about and speak about the problems that we have today with the warfare state and the welfare state. Briefly describe your ideas on both of these.*

Hornberger: It is two halves of a problem. You've got the welfare state problem, which is essentially the socialist system where the government's taking money from one group of people in order to give it to another group of people. So you have this massive confiscation and redistributive program put together by the IRS that consists of things like Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, education grants, farm subsidies, aid to foreign dictatorships; it's a massive major turn from the direction that America was on. It originated near the beginning the 20th century with the Federal Reserve and the adoption of the 16th Amendment, the income tax amendment, but it came into full bloom during the regime of Franklin Roosevelt, where the primary purpose of the federal government became to confiscate wealth and to redistribute it. That's half of the problem facing this country.

At the Future of Freedom Foundation, we say it's time to dismantle all these programs, including Social Security, repeal them, and restore a totally free-market society to our land where people keep everything they earn, they decide what to do with it, honoring their mother and father on a voluntary basis, handling their own retirement, their own charity, and so forth. The other half is the warfare state — the turn toward empire that America took in the 19th and 20th centuries. We've got bases all over the world, hundreds of bases in some 130 countries, with invasions, occupations, regime change operations, torture, torture partnerships with dictatorships. This is not "nation building," or "stabilization" — this is that imperial mindset, that, hey, let's have America as an empire, militarism, regimentation, and glorification for the military way of life. This is totally antithetical to the principles on which America was founded. Madison warned us that of all the enemies to liberty, war is the biggest. Washington said, no entangling alliances, don't get involved in those foreign wars. Well, we've abandoned those principles and now you have a government that is out of control, hurtling toward bankruptcy; the military doesn't want to let go of its dole, the welfare recipients don't want to let go of their dole, and in the meantime we're spending and borrowing and inflating like there's no tomorrow.

TNA: *I want to look at some of those in more detail. Let's go back to the welfare state. We just went through the issue of the debt-ceiling limit and the discussion on supposedly cutting spending. We're cutting the increases in future spending, but not current spending. What would you do currently, other than what we are seeing with the ongoing issues in Washington?*

Hornberger: They should never have lifted the debt ceiling. All that's doing is letting the government mount more debt on the tops of the backs of the American people. We each owe pro rata about \$45,000; for a family of four that's \$180,000. If they hadn't lifted the debt ceiling the government would have had to just live according to the amount of tax revenue that was coming in. They would have had to prioritize what to do with the money. It seems that they would prioritize in terms of making sure that they paid their debt on time. That to me was a great opportunity, especially for conservative Republicans, to say: "Well, now that we can't afford to pay for all the excess stuff by borrowing for it, now's the time to dismantle programs" — the stuff Ronald Reagan used to talk about — dismantle the Department of Education, Department of Commerce, Energy. That was the perfect opportunity for Republicans to say we don't have any choice here. Now, the real solution, and this is what Americans have to start facing, is to start dismantling entitlement programs. That means repealing Medicare, repealing Social Security, instead of just talking about repealing ObamaCare. That only trims a branch



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off the tree. The root of the weed is Medicare; that's what needs to be pulled out, and reestablish a free market in healthcare.

TNA: *Getting more specific on just that one issue, have you or any of the people associated with the Future of Freedom Foundation looked at an actual practical way, with Medicare for instance, with the massive quantities of money being spent there and the massive quantities of people that are dependent on it, to get from here to there? Is this eliminated overnight, or is there a phased-in program? Has anyone put forward a program for defunding or abolishing it?*

Hornberger: Our primary focus at the Future of Freedom Foundation is on moral principles. We get into the practical side of libertarian principles because we believe that the only practical approach is libertarian. But on the moral side, once you conclude that something is morally wrong, we take the position that the only proper approach is immediate repeal. You can't advocate the continuation or a gradual phase-out of something that you believe is immoral. Take for example Governor Perry. Governor Perry says Social Security is a Ponzi scheme, which means it's fraudulent, it's immoral, it's a monstrous lie. But then what does he say? He says we've got to save it, we've got to fix it, we've got to continue it. How do you reconcile that with your own moral principles? If you see something's wrong, to me the only proper approach is, end it now. If you caught an embezzler embezzling funds and he says, "I'm dependent on the money, can you phase me out of this embezzlement?" we'd say of course not, we're going to cut you off. So we would say repeal Medicare because it's the cause of all the out-of-control spending. Immediately a free market would come into existence. Let doctors and hospitals handle the charity cases. That's what they did before Medicare. We've got to put our trust back in the American people and back in the working of the market.



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