THE LIBERTY PROGRESSIVE FRAMEWORK (Version 0.3 January 2026)

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to articulate a coherent and defensible framework for my political philosophy. I have often described myself as a "classical liberal," but I came to realize that this label was more reflexive than precise. It failed to capture important nuances that distinguish my worldview from much of contemporary progressivism. As I examined these distinctions, I saw an opportunity to reinterpret the classical foundations I draw from (e.g., the Enlightenment tradition and Popperian epistemology) in a modern context that clarifies key tensions within today's progressive landscape.

I see the current political climate in the United States as defined by reciprocal populisms: right-wing populism met with left-wing populism, each fueling the other in increasingly destabilizing cycles. I believe this dynamic creates pathological swings of the political pendulum that threaten to undermine the conditions for human progress and flourishing. This framework, what I call Liberty Progressivism, is an attempt to outline a philosophical orientation that could help redirect our political discourse away from that spiral and back toward a shared commitment to open-ended progress.

Because I identify as progressive, the analysis here focuses primarily on internal distinctions within the progressive tradition. While the conservative political spectrum has its own schisms and pathologies, addressing those is not the aim of this document. That said, I believe the Liberty Progressive framework may naturally create constructive points of contact with liberty-oriented conservatives and could, in the long run, help reduce partisan division. Exploring those bridges, however, lies outside the scope of the present work.

This framework is strongly influenced by the critical rationalism of Karl Popper, as extended and applied to the modern world by physicist David Deutsch (particularly in his book *The Beginning of Infinity*). Deutsch's vision of infinite, open-ended progress through knowledge creation via conjecture and criticism profoundly shapes the emphasis here on protecting the means of progress over any fixed outcomes.

My two primary goals are:

1. To lay out a clear account of my political philosophy so that it can be openly criticized and improved, both by myself and by others.

2. To articulate a progressive orientation grounded in freedom, fallibilism, and decentralized problem-solving. A political philosophy that I believe, if found compelling, supports a culture supportive of unbounded human flourishing through persuasion rather than coercion.

Defining Progressive vs. Conservative

This document aims to define and contrast political philosophies within the progressive sphere. Therefore, it is essential to clearly articulate the core features that differentiate the progressive sphere from the conservative sphere. While the high-level distinction is often framed as progressives generally preferring dynamic societies and conservatives generally preferring static societies, the practical differences are more nuanced. I define the key distinctions between progressives and conservatives are defined as follows:

Progressives: emphasize improvement through change. They see human knowledge, technology, and social organization as evolving systems that can be reformed to reduce suffering and expand opportunity. Tradition is respected when it serves human flourishing, but it is never immune to criticism or revision. Progressives tend to believe that the future can and should be better than the past, and that deliberate effort and experimentation are needed to make it so.

Conservatives: emphasize stability through continuity. They view long-standing customs, moral codes, and institutions as repositories of accumulated wisdom, mechanisms that have survived because they serve deep human needs. While change may be necessary, it should proceed cautiously, preserving what has proven to work and avoiding the unintended consequences of rapid social engineering.

The Core Contention of the Modern Progressive Schism

Following from my definition above, "progressivism" is classically referred to an orientation toward open-ended progress; i.e., the belief that knowledge, reason, and criticism drive improvement (e.g., the Enlightenment tradition). Today, many progressives equate progress only with social or moral outcomes rather than with the process that creates them. For example:

- Many modern progressives openly defend restrictions on speech in the name of preventing "harm" or "hate speech." University bias-response teams investigate protected speech that merely causes offense. Activists pressure social-media companies to suppress dissenting scientific views or heterodox political arguments. Instead of treating ideas as hypotheses to be tested, many progressives now treat them as threats to be contained.

- During the COVID pandemic, many progressive jurisdictions kept schools closed long after evidence supported reopening, and criticism of lockdown policies was framed as a moral failure rather than a legitimate scientific disagreement. What should have been treated as a contested empirical question became a test of ideological loyalty.

- In cities like San Francisco and Portland, homelessness and addiction policies became moral imperatives insulated from criticism even as overdose deaths rose and street conditions deteriorated. Requests for data or policy revision were often dismissed as lacking compassion, replacing learning with moral signaling.

- Many environmental progressives now use environmental regulations designed for fossil-fuel infrastructure to block clean-energy projects, particularly nuclear power and transmission lines. The identity of "environmental protection" overrides the process required to achieve net zero, illustrating how preferred outcomes can overrule the very experimentation needed for genuine progress.

In each case, specific outcomes are treated as unquestionable progressive goods, while the process of criticism and knowledge-generation, which are the actual engine of progress, is sidelined. This, I believe, is the core pathology within the modern American progressive movement. Specifically, when moral certainty replaces open inquiry, progressivism becomes regressive by preserving ideology and dogma instead of expanding knowledge. I believe that in order to sustain true progress, we must defend the means of progress: free thought, criticism, and decentralized discovery.

Defining Liberty Progressivism

Liberty Progressivism descends from the Enlightenment tradition and critical rationalism. The philosophy of critical rationalism was pioneered by the philosopher of science Karl Popper and powerfully elaborated by the physicist David Deutsch. Critical rationalism holds that progress is the growth of knowledge through conjecture, criticism, and error correction. As Deutsch argues in *The Beginning of Infinity*, human advancement (scientific, moral, technological, or political) emerges only from systems that allow bold conjectures and rigorous criticism, with no idea or authority immune from challenge. Every major leap—from vaccines to civil rights, from the printing press to the digital revolution—was the product of a culture where dissent was permitted and no idea or authority was immune from criticism.

At its core, Liberty Progressivism holds that the means of progress are more fundamental than any particular progressive outcome. If we protect the mechanisms of error correction, good outcomes can emerge from the iterative process of learning (i.e., a culture of open conjecture and criticism). If we suppress those mechanisms, even the most well-intentioned goals become brittle dogmas that decay over time. Following Deutsch, a Liberty Progressive treats freedom not as an abstract moral entitlement, but as a functional requirement for problem-solving. Freedom is what allows errors to be revealed, alternative solutions to be tested, and new explanations to be generated. In this way, liberty is inseparable from progress. Under Liberty Progressivism, it is not too far to suggest that preserving the means of error correction is the root of all progress and morality. To sustain that process, society must preserve three essential means of error correction:

1. Free Speech and Free Thought

The freedom to conjecture, criticize, debate, and dissent is the bedrock of any knowledge-creating civilization. Without free speech, society loses its ability to detect errors and learning collapses into obedience. For a Liberty Progressive, free inquiry is not merely a constitutional right, rather it is the operating principle of progress itself.

2. Distributed Power and the Right to Resist Coercion

Knowledge creation thrives when no single institution, ideology, or authority can dominate the terms of inquiry. Distributed power, including checks and balances, local autonomy, competitive markets, and the individual right to self-defense, prevents coercive monopolies on truth. When people cannot be coerced into silence or compliance, they retain the ability to criticize errors wherever they arise, whether in the state, corporate power, or social majorities.

3. Decentralized Experimentation in Markets, Culture, and Governance

Transformative progress rarely emerges from top-down prescriptions or central planning. It arises when individuals and groups, pursuing their own problems and curiosities, generate solutions that no central authority could have anticipated. Decentralized systems harness countless independent problem-finders, who notice local issues, unmet needs, or new possibilities, and allow them to test solutions in parallel. Free markets illustrate this dynamic especially well, serving as discovery engines where individuals try new products, services, and business models, and feedback from the world reveals which ideas survive reality. An example is Nvidia's market-leading position in artificial intelligence (A.I.). Nvidia began by solving a very particular problem: delivering fast computations for 3D video games. No committee or expert panel could have foreseen that the same hardware primitives required for 3D gaming would later become the essential for modern A.I. learning and inference. The world benefits today because a company was free to solve a narrow problem that mattered to gamers without needing permission or central planning.

In summary, a Liberty Progressive sees human flourishing as an open-ended project, not a destination, blueprint, or static moral equilibrium, but a process with infinite potential. What matters most is protecting the conditions for progress to continue indefinitely. Put another way: we should not chase a final, static moral goal. Instead, we embrace the endless pursuit of better explanations, always striving to be less wrong. As David Deutsch likes to say, "Problems are inevitable, but problems are soluble [given the requisite knowledge]". The wealth of our nations and the survival of our planet and species depends almost completely on the continued growth of human knowledge.

Why Liberty and not Libertarian

Liberty Progressive emphasizes freedom as the mechanism of progress, not as an ideology of extreme individualism. Classical libertarianism fits this view, but the term "libertarian" has drifted, often reduced to a caricature of anti-government dogma. (e.g., ideological anarchism or minarchism). By using "liberty," I'm appealing to the Enlightenment tradition (shared by Deutsch), where freedom, reason, and knowledge creation were inseparable. Liberty, in this framework, is not incompatible with collective good, rather it's what makes the collective capable of problem solving and knowledge creation. Liberty Progressivism treats liberty as a tool for knowledge growth and progress, where libertarianism treats liberty as the final moral principle. Table 1 provides further details on the key distinctions between Liberty Progressivism and Libertarianism across several key dimensions of political philosophy.

Dimension	Liberty Progressivism	Libertarianism
Goal	Preserve and expand the means of progress: free inquiry, distributed power, the right to criticism.	Maximize individual freedom and minimize state involvement.
Role of the State	Limited but essential: protect rights, maintain the spirit of the republic (preserve the means of error correction).	Minimize government as much as possible; focus on non-interference.
Economic View	Markets as discovery engines; support intervention when necessary to restore competition and prevent monopolies.	Markets as self-correcting systems. Oppose most regulation and redistribution.
Philosophical Root	Enlightenment fallibilism: freedom as the mechanism of error correction.	Natural rights liberalism: freedom as a moral end in itself.
View of Power	Concerned with all concentrations of power (state, corporate, algorithmic).	Primarily concerned with state power.
Moral Posture	Fallibilist: problems are inevitable but solvable through open systems.	Absolutist: coercion by the state is the primary moral evil.

Table 1: Key distinctions between Liberty Progressivism and Libertarianism

The Two Principal Components of Modern Progressivism

I establish my framework along two key principle components that I believe explain the majority of the variance in the current progressive political landscape. I believe this two-axis framework is helpful for understanding how Liberty Progressivism distinguishes from other contemporary forms of progressivism. It may also serve as an illustrative tool for comparing and contrasting various individual progressive politicians according to their stated beliefs or implemented policies.

Principal Axis 1: Liberty vs. Statist Axis

Statist progressives sit orthogonal to Liberty progressives concerning where society locates the capacity for problem solving. In general, Liberty progressives trust distributed problem solving where progress emerges from free individuals and institutions experimenting, criticizing, and learning from failure. Statist progressives trust centralized coordination where progress is directed through organized expertise, planning, and coordinated policy. Statist progressives can see individual liberties as impediments to achieving goals and seek to put limits on individual freedoms and other means of error correction to achieve short-term goals at the expense of long-term error correction. The extremes illustrate the distinctions between Statist and Liberty progressives, but I recognize that individuals hold complex belief systems and may hold a mix of beliefs that may distribute along this axis. Therefore the political beliefs of most individuals are likely to be centered in some position between the extreme poles of this dimension to allow for nuance.

Principal Axis 2: Reformer vs. Revolutionary Axis

Progressives can share goals (e.g., reduce income inequality) but differ drastically in proposed methods to achieve shared goals. Reformer progressives see society as improvable through iterative change via test,

learn, adapt cycles. Reformers tend to adopt fallibilism as an epistemic posture, believing that progress is achieved through iterative error correction. Revolutionary progressives see society as fundamentally broken and requiring deconstruction and redesign. Revolutionaries tend to adopt moral certainty as an epistemic posture, believing that progress is achieved once justice is implemented. Reformers tend to view existing institutions as means to solve problems
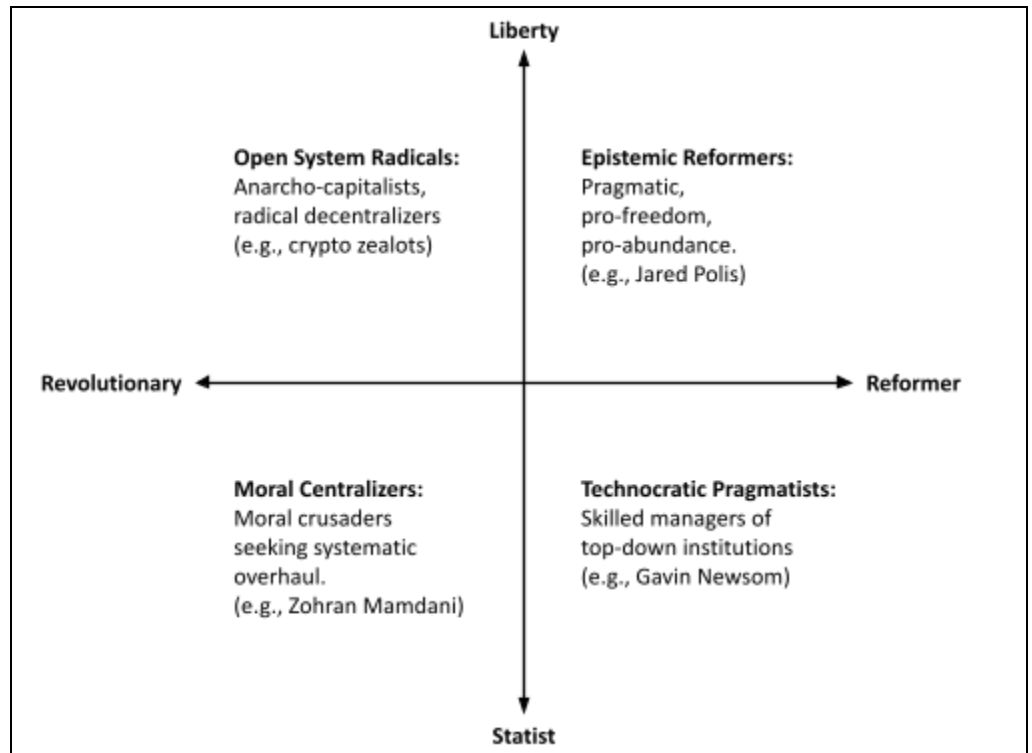
Liberty

Open System Radicals:
Anarcho-capitalists,
radical decentralizers
(e.g., crypto zealots)

Epistemic Reformers:
Pragmatic,
pro-freedom,
pro-abundance.
(e.g., Jared Polis)

Revolutionary ← → Reformer

Moral Centralizers:
Moral crusaders
seeking systematic
overhaul.
(e.g., Zohran Mamdani)

Technocratic Pragmatists:
Skilled managers of
top-down institutions
(e.g., Gavin Newsom)

Statist

Figure 1: The two principal axes of modern progressivism.

and revolutionaries tend to view existing institutions as manifestations of a broken system. Again, the extremes illustrate the distinctions between Reformer and Revolutionary progressives, but I recognize that individuals hold complex belief systems and may hold a mix of beliefs that may distribute along this axis. Therefore the political beliefs of most individuals are likely to be centered in some position between the extreme poles of this dimension to allow for nuance.

As a final caveat, I recognize that, in reality, political philosophy is a highly multi-dimensional space, and that certainly some key distinctions and nuance will be lost by "flattening" the space into two principal dimensions. Nonetheless, my hypothesis here is that these two dimensions explain the largest proportion of the variance in political philosophy among contemporary progressives particularly in American politics.

Liberty Reformer vs. Statist Revolutionary: Epistemic Humility vs. Moral Certainty

When we plot the two orthogonal axes together we find quadrants that define four distinct spaces within the progressive political sphere. Figure 1 offers labels and short descriptions of each quadrant with an illustrative example politician for each quadrant, when appropriate. These spaces suggest characteristic ideas and tendencies that can be extrapolated (hypothetically) from our understanding of the two foundational axes (shown in Table 2). We can further explore distinctions between these quadrants by identifying individuals or individual politicians who philosophically align, in whole or in large part, with a given quadrant (Figure 2).
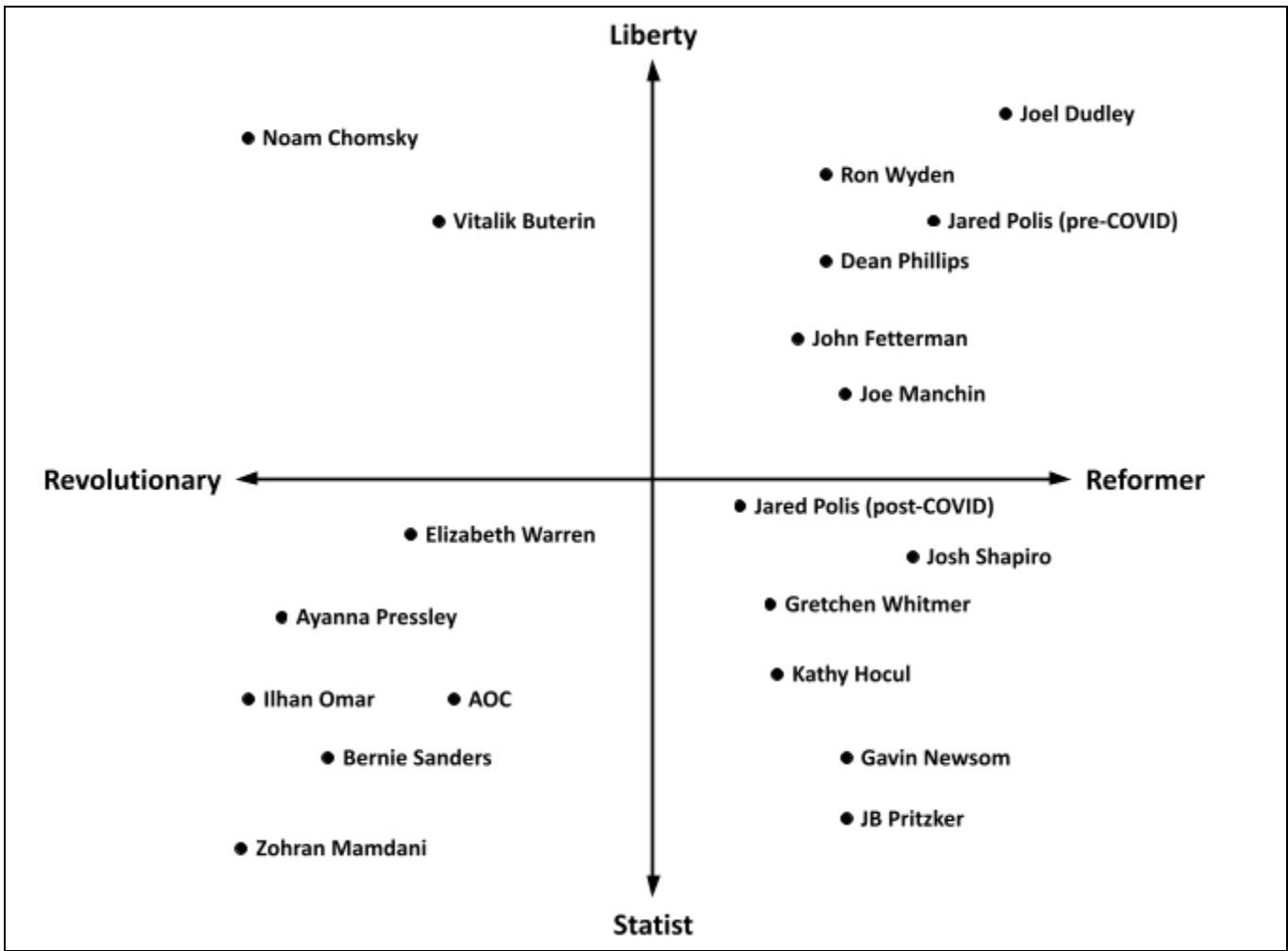
Figure 2: Illustrative Quadrants of Modern Progressivism with contemporary examples (placements approximate, based on public stances, and intended for discussion).

Dimension	Liberty Reformer	Statist Revolutionary
Epistemic Stance	Humility: assumes problems are inevitable but soluble through open criticism & market innovation.	Certainty: assumes moral and social truths are largely known and must be enacted.
View of Ignorance	All humans are equally ignorant thus progress means correcting our shared errors.	Ignorance is unevenly distributed thus experts or enlightened groups must guide others.
Philosophy of Change	Continuous error correction and adaptation.	Planned moral improvement through managed outcomes.
Emotional Posture	Fallibilism and curiosity.	Righteousness and control.

Table 2: Key distinctions between Liberty Reformers and Statist Revolutionaries.

The Scale of Change: Reform vs. Revolution

One common objection to liberty-oriented progressivism is that it lacks the ambition or force needed for truly radical transformation. Revolutionaries often argue that meaningful change requires bold, decisive action to deconstruct broken systems and enforce moral or ideological purity through centralized authority. Reformers, by contrast, are dismissed as timid incrementalists who tinker at the edges while injustice persists. This view misunderstands the nature of progress. Radical change doesn't require coercion or moral certainty. History shows that open, liberty-based systems rooted in free inquiry, distributed experimentation, and institutional self-correction can produce transformation every bit as sweeping as authoritarian revolutions. Often with fewer horrors, greater durability, and compounding benefits over time.

Consider how the Enlightenment's culture of criticism and conjecture sparked cascading advances in science, rights, and prosperity without violent upheaval in many places. Or how the American founding institutionalized fallibilism through checks and balances, enabling ongoing adaptation rather than periodic collapse. Even the Digital Revolution emerged from decentralized innovation (e.g., garage hackers and open protocols) reshaping the world more profoundly than any planned economy ever could. Authoritarian revolutions, by contrast, often begin with zeal for justice but end in stagnation: truth is decreed, criticism suppressed, and error-correction mechanisms dismantled. The result is short-lived upheaval followed by retrenchment. Table 3 below contrasts these approaches across key dimensions, illustrating why liberty-reformer methods, not statist revolutionary ones, are more likely to offer a sustaining path to enduring progress.

Dimension	Liberty Reformer Movements	Statist Revolutionary Movements
Historical Examples	The Enlightenment, The American Revolution, The Digital Revolution	The French Terror, The Bolshevik Revolution, The Chinese Cultural Revolution
Change Mechanisms	Open inquiry, distributed experimentation, lawful dissent, institutional self-correction.	Centralized enforcement of moral or ideological purity; coercive conformity.
Epistemic Posture	Fallibilism: "problems are inevitable but soluble."	Certitude: "the problem is people who resist truth."
Scale & Impact	Generates creative destruction within stable institutions; knowledge and wealth compound.	Produces rapid upheaval but epistemic stagnation; institutions collapse, truth is decreed.
Outcome	Enduring moral and material progress through freedom.	Short-lived zeal followed by authoritarian retrenchment.

Table 3: Comparison and contrast of the nature and characteristics of change between progressive movements led by Liberty Reformers vs. Statist Revolutionaries

Why I Call Myself a Liberty Progressive

Progress is the growth of knowledge, not merely the accumulation of virtue[1]. Systems that suppress criticism stagnate, even when motivated by the noblest intentions. When criticism becomes taboo, "progressive" institutions stop learning. Authoritarianism in the name of justice remains authoritarianism. True

progressivism requires epistemic humility: every society must stay open to being wrong. Progressives who drift too far down the Statist or Revolutionary axes risk becoming enemies of progress rather than its champions. Progress is not guaranteed, but rather it is earned through knowledge creation and relentless error correction. Human betterment does not demand moral purity. Instead, it demands open-ended problem-solving. Authoritarianism, whether religious or secular, assumes it already possesses the truth and inevitably suppresses discovery. Liberalism at its best institutionalizes the right to be wrong and the freedom to find out why. Defending the freedoms of thought, speech, autonomy, and experimentation is neither conservative nor radical. It is explicitly liberal, explicitly progressive, and the only proven engine of human advancement.

Living and Advancing Liberty Progressivism

My hope is that Liberty Progressivism is not merely a diagnostic tool but also a practical orientation we can live out and share. To deepen understanding, I especially recommend David Deutsch's book, *The Beginning of Infinity*, as it provides the philosophical foundation for much of this framework and inspires genuine optimism about what's possible when we protect the means of progress. The following is an attempt to reduce the Liberty Progressive framework into action within various spheres of life:

Personal Level

- **Cultivate epistemic humility:** regularly seek out thoughtful disagreement. Treat policy debates as empirical questions and error correction opportunities, not moral purity tests.

- **Champion free expression in daily life:** defend others' right to speak, even when you disagree, and model good-faith criticism.

- **Support decentralized discovery:** engage with and back the startup ecosystem (e.g., using innovative products, investing where possible, or advocating for entrepreneur-friendly policies), contribute to open-source projects or promote and preserve access to open-source software, and champion local experiments rather than waiting for top-down solutions.

Communal and Cultural Level

- **Push cultural institutions toward openness:** Advocate for universities, media platforms, and scientific bodies to prioritize real viewpoint diversity and error-correction over ideological conformity.

- **Amplify Liberty Reformer voices:** Highlight and support progressive leaders who combine ambitious goals with pragmatic, evidence-based, liberty-respecting methods.

Political Level

- **Advocate for structural safeguards:** support reforms that distribute power and protect error-correction mechanisms: e.g., ranked-choice voting, federalism, independent redistricting, strong

free-speech protections, robust Second Amendment rights as a check against coercive monopolies on power[2], and antitrust enforcement against corporate monopolies and regulatory capture.

- **Endorse candidates who score high on both progressive goals and liberty-reformer methods:** Prioritize those who reject censorship, moral policing, and centralized planning while pursuing ambitious aims such as reducing barriers to opportunity, accelerating energy innovation, and fostering innovation-driven prosperity. If an election doesn't have any liberty-oriented progressives, throw aside partisan bias and vote for independents or economic conservatives who are more closely aligned with Liberty Progressive principles.

- **Engage in persuasion, not cancellation when advocating for change:** Focus on evidence, experimentation, and voluntary cooperation rather than coercive mandates or shame.

Liberty Progressivism succeeds through attraction and demonstration, not coercion. By living these principles—remaining open to criticism, defending the right to be wrong, and trusting distributed problem-solving—we can help progressivism reclaim its role as the champion of open-ended human advancement.

Liberty Progressivism Applied: A Policy Guide

The following section applies the Liberty Progressive framework to common political issues that arise during elections. The goal here is to demonstrate what I believe to be a key strength of this framework, which is that it derives strong policy positions from epistemological principles rather than religious doctrine, dogmatic tribal loyalty, or appeals to moral certainty. Each position flows from the same foundational commitment: protecting the means of error correction: free speech, distributed power, resistance to coercion, and decentralized experimentation. To me, this enables one to hold progressive views while maintaining a position that is both intellectually rigorous and logically consistent.

For each issue, I present the Liberty Progressive position and how each position ties to the framework rationale.

I.   Free Speech and Content Moderation

Liberty Progressive Position: Strongly oppose government restrictions on speech. Maintain skepticism toward corporate and institutional speech controls, particularly when they suppress heterodox scientific or political views. Resist "hate speech" as a legal category.

Framework Rationale: Free speech is the operating principle of progress itself. Without the freedom to conjecture, criticize, debate, and dissent, society loses its capacity for error detection and learning collapses into obedience. This concern extends beyond government censorship to institutional pressures that produce chilling effects—university bias-response teams, social media suppression of contested scientific claims, and corporate policies that treat ideas as threats rather than hypotheses. The remedy for bad speech is more speech, not enforced silence.

Additional Commentary: The Liberty Progressive acknowledges that hateful and bigoted speech exists and can cause real harm. However, "hate speech" as a legal category is fraught with such great risk and should be resisted as a lawmaking principle. The determination of what constitutes "hate" inevitably becomes a subjective political question, and the power to define and punish hate speech will be captured by whoever holds institutional authority at any given moment. Today's marginalized group may become tomorrow's enforcer, and today's protected opinion may become tomorrow's prosecuted heresy. History offers no shortage of examples where speech restrictions enacted with good intentions were later weaponized against the very groups they were meant to protect. Private actors may set their own norms, but even they should be wary of constructing censorship infrastructure that can be turned against open inquiry.

II.   Reproductive Rights and Abortion

Liberty Progressive Position: Pro-choice. Individuals should retain decision-making authority over their own bodies and reproductive futures.

Framework Rationale: Bodily autonomy is foundational to participation in the error-correction process. A person who does not control their own body cannot fully engage in the conjecture-and-criticism that drives progress. Coerced pregnancy transfers decision-making from the individual to the state, creating centralized power over one of the most consequential aspects of human life.

Additional Commentary: Beyond resistance to coercion, reproductive choice is essential for preserving individual creative capacity. Unwanted pregnancy can derail education, career development, and the pursuit of problems that matter to the individual: all of which represent potential contributions to the broader project of knowledge creation. A society that forces individuals into parenthood against their will is a society that squanders human potential on a massive scale. This is not to diminish the value of parenthood, which many freely choose, but to insist that the choice itself is what unlocks human flourishing. When individuals can plan their reproductive lives, they can invest in developing their capacities, pursuing their curiosities, and solving problems, which are the very activities that drive progress. The Liberty Progressive position does not require resolving metaphysical debates about personhood, rather it holds that the state should not coerce individuals on matters where reasonable people disagree and where the individual bears the primary consequences.

III.   "Gun Control" and Second Amendment Rights

Liberty Progressive Position: Support robust Second Amendment protections. The individual right to armed self-defense serves as a structural check against coercive monopolies on power. Support evidence-based efforts to reduce gun violence that do not compromise this structural function.

Framework Rationale: As established in the framework's foundational principles, the right to armed self-defense functions as the guarantor of the other means of error correction. Free speech protections are contingent on the goodwill of those who hold centralized power unless citizens retain the distributed capacity to resist coercion. An armed citizenry creates a credible constraint on state overreach that paper rights alone cannot provide. The Second Amendment exists to ensure the First Amendment remains functional—not as a parallel right, but as its structural backstop.

Additional Commentary: The Liberty Progressive is not indifferent to gun violence. Reducing harm is a legitimate goal, and the framework supports investigating falsifiable conjectures about the drivers of gun violence; i.e., mental health failures, social isolation, economic desperation, gang activity, inadequate enforcement of existing laws, etc., and testing interventions that address root causes. What the framework resists is the reflexive move to disarm citizens as the primary solution, because doing so undermines the distributed power that preserves the means of error correction. This involves an honest acknowledgment of trade-offs. Society already accepts such trade-offs in other domains. If we reduced the speed limit to 10 mph on all roads and highways, we would save tens of thousands of lives annually. Yet society has decided that the additional deaths from higher speeds are an acceptable trade-off for the benefits of faster transportation. This is not callousness, rather it is a recognition that some risks are worth bearing to preserve capacities that matter. The Liberty Progressive applies the same logic to the Second Amendment: the distributed capacity to resist coercion is so vital to preserving the conditions for long-term human flourishing that some trade-offs

are worth accepting. This does not mean ignoring gun violence, but it does mean refusing to sacrifice a foundational check on power in pursuit of safety gains that may prove illusory or that could be achieved through other means.

IV.   Immigration

Liberty Progressive Position: Support expansive legal immigration with streamlined pathways. Oppose both closed-border nativism and open-border absolutism. Recognize that the cultural conditions for progress are not universal.

Framework Rationale: Immigration is a form of decentralized experimentation. Immigrants are problem-solvers who bring diverse knowledge and perspectives that enrich the host society's capacity for error correction. Restrictive immigration policies assume bureaucrats can predict who will contribute to progress, which is an assumption inconsistent with fallibilism. However, the Liberty Progressive must grapple honestly with culture. The Western liberal Enlightenment tradition (i.e., free inquiry, tolerance of dissent, separation of church and state, individual rights) represents, to date, the most successful cultural foundation for sustained progress. This is an empirical observation, not Western chauvinism. These norms are memetic, not genetic: anyone can adopt them regardless of origin.

Additional Commentary: A Liberty Progressive should welcome immigrants from any background, recognizing that individuals can adopt new cultural frameworks. However, when someone explicitly declares commitment to anti-Enlightenment principles (e.g., theocratic law over secular governance, rejection of free speech or religious pluralism, enforced gender subordination) it is rational to prioritize other applicants for limited slots. The criterion is stated ideological commitment, not ethnic or religious identity. The Liberty Progressive rejects the notion that multiculturalism is immune from criticism. Like any idea, the proposition that all cultures are equally compatible with progress must be treated as a hypothesis subject to scrutiny, and not a sacred value beyond question. Some cultural practices demonstrably suppress error correction, and acknowledging this is intellectual honesty, not bigotry.

V.   Criminal Justice Reform

Liberty Progressive Position: Support reforms that reduce incarceration, restore voting rights, end qualified immunity, and increase accountability for law enforcement, all while maintaining public safety through evidence-based policing.

Framework Rationale: Mass incarceration represents a massive suppression of human creative potential. Every person imprisoned is removed from the error-correction process, and is unable to contribute to progress economically, politically, or socially. The current system reflects moral certainty rather than fallibilist experimentation with what actually reduces harm. Liberty Progressives support iterative reforms: test alternatives to incarceration, measure outcomes, and adjust. Qualified immunity and police militarization

concentrate coercive power in ways that undermine distributed checks. Restoring voting rights to formerly incarcerated individuals returns them to participation in democratic error correction.

Additional Commentary: The Liberty Progressive must apply the same critical scrutiny to progressive criminal justice reforms as to any other policy. Slogans like "Defund the Police" and bail reforms that release repeat violent offenders represent the same pathology the framework identifies elsewhere: moral certainty overriding empirical feedback. When judges release defendants with dozens of prior violent arrests on minimal bail in the name of equity, and when those defendants predictably reoffend, the policy has been falsified. A genuine reformer adjusts where an ideologue doubles down. Public safety is not a conservative talking point, rather it is a precondition for citizens to participate in open society. People who fear for their physical safety cannot fully engage in the error-correction process. A community terrorized by crime is not free, regardless of what reforms have been enacted in its name. The Liberty Progressive seeks a criminal justice system that is less coercive, more accountable, and more effective, and recognizes that these goals are complementary, not contradictory, and that reforms which make communities less safe have failed on their own terms.

VI.   Healthcare

Liberty Progressive Position: Support universal access to healthcare through a mixed system that preserves competition, choice, and experimentation. Oppose single-payer monopolies that eliminate market feedback mechanisms.

Framework Rationale: Healthcare is essential for individuals to participate fully in the error-correction process. Liberty Progressives therefore support ensuring universal access. However, a single-payer monopoly eliminates the decentralized experimentation that drives medical innovation and quality improvement. The framework favors systems that guarantee access while preserving competition among providers, insurers, and treatment approaches. Countries like Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands offer models where universal coverage coexists with market mechanisms.

Additional Commentary: Single-payer systems consolidate all healthcare financing into a government monopoly, eliminating the competitive feedback loops that drive innovation and efficiency. A single-payer monopoly, once established, becomes resistant to criticism and reform, which is the very pathology the framework identifies in other progressive institutions. When one entity controls all healthcare decisions, errors cannot be easily corrected through competitive pressure, and patients lose the ability to exit bad systems. Universal access can be achieved while preserving decentralized experimentation. Switzerland offers the clearest example: every resident is required to have health insurance, subsidies ensure affordability, and insurers must accept all applicants regardless of health status, and yet the system operates through competing private insurers and providers. Switzerland achieves universal coverage, largely with better outcomes than single-payer systems, precisely because competition reveals errors and rewards improvement. The goal is universal coverage, not government monopoly, and progressives should recognize that these are distinct objectives requiring different policy architectures.

VII.   Climate and Energy Policy

Liberty Progressive Position: Aggressively pursue decarbonization through innovation, nuclear power, and streamlined permitting, and not through degrowth or energy austerity. Simultaneously invest in adaptation technologies that allow humanity to thrive regardless of climate outcomes.

Framework Rationale: Climate change is a solvable problem, but only if we protect the means of solving it: technological experimentation, competitive energy markets, and the freedom to deploy new solutions at scale. The framework rejects using regulations designed for fossil fuels to block nuclear plants, transmission lines, and solar farms. Liberty Progressives support aggressive carbon reduction through abundance—more clean energy, not less energy overall. Permitting reform, nuclear deployment, and carbon pricing that lets markets discover the cheapest abatement pathways are all consistent with the framework. Problems are soluble through knowledge creation, not managed decline.

Additional Commentary: Crucially, the Liberty Progressive rejects the false choice between mitigation and adaptation. As David Deutsch has observed, we should pursue both: plan for a world where we solve climate change, and plan for a world where we use technology to adapt if mitigation falls short. This is not defeatism, rather it is reason and fallibilism applied to existential risk. We cannot know with certainty which path will succeed, so we invest in parallel approaches. Human beings have already demonstrated the capacity to thrive in the most extreme climates on Earth—from Dubai to Siberia—through technological adaptation. There is no reason to assume we cannot continue to extend that capacity. A Liberty Progressive climate policy therefore supports robust investment in adaptation technologies (e.g., sea walls, drought-resistant agriculture, advanced cooling and heating systems, desalination) alongside aggressive decarbonization. Betting everything on a single pathway is the opposite of the distributed experimentation the framework demands.

VIII.   Education

Liberty Progressive Position: Support school choice, charter schools, and educational pluralism. Oppose one-size-fits-all curricula and ideological conformity in schools. Embrace technological and cultural change rather than resisting it through moral panic.

Framework Rationale: Education is where the next generation learns to participate in the error-correction process. A centralized, monopolistic education system risks producing ideological conformity rather than independent thinkers capable of criticism and conjecture. School choice introduces decentralized experimentation; i.e., different schools try different approaches, parents select based on outcomes, and successful models can be identified and scaled. The Liberty Progressive opposes the use of schools to enforce any particular ideology, whether religious traditionalism or progressive orthodoxy. The goal is to produce citizens capable of thinking for themselves (i.e., as creative universal explainers and fallibilists).

Additional Commentary: The Liberty Progressive also recognizes that educational institutions have a persistent tendency to resist technological and cultural change through moral panic, and that this tendency

has been wrong virtually every time. Schools once banned calculators, fearing they would destroy mathematical reasoning, yet today calculators are standard classroom tools. Comic books were condemned as corrupting influences that would rot children's minds, yet today graphic novels are assigned reading. Television, video games, and the internet each triggered waves of panic followed by integration. Now schools are banning smartphones and AI tools, repeating the same faulty pattern. Students who learn to use AI effectively will outcompete those who are shielded from it. A Liberty Progressive education policy embraces technological change and prepares students to thrive with new tools rather than pretending those tools can be wished away. The purpose of education is to equip the next generation for the world they will actually inhabit, not to preserve the world their teachers grew up in.

IX.   Economic Policy and Antitrust

Liberty Progressive Position: Support competitive markets as discovery engines. Aggressively enforce antitrust laws against monopolies and oligopolies, including in technology, finance, and media. Distinguish between free-market capitalism and crony capitalism, and oppose the latter.

Framework Rationale: Markets are mechanisms for decentralized experimentation. When markets function, they allow countless independent problem-solvers to test ideas, with feedback from reality revealing which solutions work. But markets fail when monopolies suppress competition, capture regulators, and eliminate feedback loops. The Liberty Progressive is concerned with all concentrations of power—state, corporate, or algorithmic. Big Tech platforms that control information flow, financial institutions that are "too big to fail," and media conglomerates that shape public discourse all represent threats to distributed error correction. The framework supports intervention specifically to restore competition and prevent monopolistic capture.

Additional Commentary: Many progressives treat "capitalism" as a monolith deserving blanket condemnation. This misses a crucial distinction. Free-market capitalism is characterized by open competition, low barriers to entry, and feedback loops that reward value creation. Free-market capitalism is precisely the kind of decentralized discovery engine the framework endorses. It is the system that allowed Nvidia to solve a niche problem for gamers and accidentally build the infrastructure for artificial intelligence. Crony capitalism is something else entirely and it is not just adjacent to free-market capitalism, but its antithesis. In Crony capitalism, incumbent corporations leverage political connections to secure subsidies, erect regulatory barriers against competitors, and privatize gains while socializing losses. Crony capitalism is not a failure of insufficient regulation, rather (and ironically), it is a failure of regulatory capture. The solution is not to abandon markets but to restore them by breaking the cozy relationships between concentrated corporate power and the state. The Liberty Progressive critique of economic power is thus more precise than the progressive mainstream. Specifically, the problem is not capitalism per se, but the corruption of competitive markets into oligopolistic cartels protected by government favor. The answer is more competition, not less, and a vigilant separation of economic and political power. A Liberty Progressive understands that regulation often ends up serving to protect incumbents from competition, and thus should be applied judiciously and with restraint.

X.   Drug Policy

Liberty Progressive Position: Support decriminalization or legalization of drugs, with regulation focused on harm reduction rather than prohibition. Recognize that decriminalization without support structures is not decriminalization, rather it is abandonment.

Framework Rationale: Drug prohibition represents coercive state control over individual choices about one's own body. It has produced massive incarceration, empowered criminal organizations, and failed to reduce drug use—a policy empirically falsified yet persisting due to moral certainty rather than evidence. The Liberty Progressive favors treating drug use as a health issue, allowing decentralized experimentation with different regulatory approaches, and measuring outcomes rather than enforcing ideological commitments.

Additional Commentary: The Liberty Progressive must be precise about what successful decriminalization actually looks like. Portugal is frequently cited as the model, but those who cite it often ignore what made it work. Portugal did not simply stop enforcing drug laws and walk away. It created a system where drug users are brought before "dissuasion commissions" that strongly encourage treatment, impose sanctions for non-compliance, and maintain meaningful consequences for persistent refusal to engage with support services. Portugal decriminalized drug use while retaining coercive leverage to push users toward recovery. Oregon's experiment attempted to import Portugal's results without Portugal's mechanisms. It decriminalized possession but failed to build the treatment infrastructure or the accountability systems that made the Portuguese model effective. The Liberty Progressive approach is to study what actually works, including the uncomfortable parts, and implement complete systems rather than cherry-picked elements that conform to ideological preferences. Harm reduction requires more than removing criminal penalties. It requires building functional alternatives.

XI.   Foreign Policy and Military Intervention

Liberty Progressive Position: Maintain skepticism toward nation-building and wars of choice. Support robust defense of open societies against authoritarian aggression. Recognize that military force should preserve the conditions for error correction—not attempt to impose them from outside.

Framework Rationale: The Liberty Progressive approach to military force flows directly from the commitment to preserving the means of error correction, yielding a more nuanced position than simple interventionism or non-interventionism. The framework supports military defense of open societies against totalitarian threats. When authoritarian regimes attack societies that possess cultures of criticism and error correction (e.g., as Russia attacked Ukraine's aspiration to join the Western liberal order, or as Hamas and Iran threaten Israel's existence) defensive military action preserves the conditions under which progress can continue. The relevant question is epistemological: does the society being defended possess a culture of truth-seeking and self-criticism? Societies with vigorous internal debate, free press, and accountability merit defense; regimes that suppress dissent and reject criticism do not.

Additional Commentary: Note the Liberty Progressive framework remains skeptical of nation-building and wars of choice. The track record (e.g., Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya) demonstrates the limits of centralized planning applied to complex social systems. Open societies develop through internal processes, and they cannot be installed by foreign militaries. Humanitarian justifications for invasion also risk providing pretexts that aggressors exploit. The Liberty Progressive thus distinguishes between defensive wars that preserve existing open societies and offensive wars that attempt to create them. The former are often necessary, and the latter rarely succeed. Principled pacifism (i.e., rejecting all force regardless of context) is not a moral stance but often an effective alliance with aggressors.

XII.   Artificial Intelligence and Technology Governance

Liberty Progressive Position: Support innovation-friendly AI governance that addresses genuine risks without creating regulatory capture or suppressing beneficial development. Oppose consolidation of AI power into the hands of a few corporations or governments. Support a distributed "right to compute" analogous to Second Amendment principles.

Framework Rationale: AI represents a powerful new tool for knowledge creation and problem-solving that is potentially the most significant since the printing press. The Liberty Progressive approach is to maximize the benefits while maintaining distributed checks that prevent any single actor from gaining coercive control over information and decision-making. Consistent with the framework's emphasis on distributed power, consolidation of AI capability poses greater risk than distributed access. When only a handful of corporations or governments control advanced AI, they gain unprecedented leverage over information, economic activity, and decision-making, which is precisely the coercive monopoly the framework warns against. The safest path is broad distribution of AI capabilities, not concentration in the hands of "trusted" gatekeepers who will inevitably face pressure to restrict access, suppress competitors, or align AI outputs with political preferences.

Additional Commentary: The Liberty Progressive framework logic leads to what might be called a "Second Amendment for AI," or a "right to compute." Just as the right to bear arms distributes the capacity to resist coercion, the right to own and operate computational resources distributes the capacity to participate in the AI-enabled future. Montana's recently enacted Right to Compute Act (SB212) exemplifies this principle: it affirms citizens' fundamental right to acquire, possess, and use computational resources, requiring that any government restrictions be narrowly tailored to compelling interests. The Liberty Progressive supports extending such protections broadly, ensuring that individuals and small organizations retain access to AI tools rather than becoming dependent on centralized providers who may restrict, surveil, or manipulate that access. This does not mean ignoring genuine risks. Critical infrastructure controlled by AI systems warrants appropriate risk management, and safeguards against specific harms (e.g., fraud, exploitation of minors, clear public safety threats) remain legitimate. But the framework insists that restrictions be demonstrably necessary and narrowly tailored, not precautionary bans that concentrate power while claiming to protect against speculative threats.

Additional Notes

1. This is not to say virtue is inherently bad, only that there is no need to separate virtue from knowledge as a separate "pile" within this framework. All good things (including virtue) grow indefinitely through the same process: unbounded criticism in open systems. For millennia, slavery was defended as virtuous (Aristotle called it natural; some saw it as civilizing/charitable). Slavery's abolition didn't happen because societies suddenly "accumulated more virtue", rather it required open criticism (Enlightenment thinkers, abolitionists like Wilberforce) generating new knowledge about human equality and dignity. That knowledge growth produced the moral advance—i.e., we became "more virtuous" as a byproduct of being less wrong. Virtue accumulation without criticism risks dogmatism (e.g., today's moral certainties becoming tomorrow's overturned errors).

2. The right to armed self-defense functions as the guarantor of the other means of error correction. Free speech protections are ultimately contingent on the goodwill of those who hold centralized power unless citizens retain the distributed capacity to resist coercion. In this sense, the Second Amendment exists to ensure the First Amendment remains functional—not as a parallel right, but as its structural backstop.