

Introduction

North Dakota is at a crossroad. The energy sector is propelling the state into economic prosperity. High taxes, government growth, and corporate welfare are lurking in the shadows. To steer public policy toward continued prosperity, North Dakota needs to reclaim two basic principles: individual rights and economic freedom.

Too often, government leaders see themselves as facilitators of change, whether it be political, social, or economic. A representative government, however, is not constituted to induce change. It has a far more important purpose.

The United States Constitution guarantees that government exists to protect individual rights and promote economic freedom.

Protecting the rights of the individual is the first and foremost function of government. Freedom from government intrusion is the essential guiding principle needed to create good public policy.

Thomas Jefferson wrote,

A wise and frugal government... shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government.

Time and again people try to use the force of government to change people's behaviors, in some cases, to protect people from themselves. Some may think that protecting people is worth the slight erosion of individual liberty. Yet Founding Father James Madison said, "I believe there are more instances of the abridgement of freedoms of the people by gradual and silent encroachment of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations." Promoting economic freedom is the surest way of helping citizens in their pursuit of happiness.

A better North Dakota is a freer North Dakota. Cutting taxes, decreasing the size of government and ending corporate welfare will unleash the creativity and initiative of North Dakota's people. Opportunities to raise strong and healthy families will again abound, and economic opportunities will increase.

The two principles of individual liberty and economic freedom never age. As you read about the major policy issues facing North Dakota, may you be renewed in a quest for liberty.



– Brett Narloch, Executive Director