Bill of Rights Update

Fans of Liberty | Discussion Draft v0.6 | Principles 1-3

E pluribus unum - Out of many, one.

Bill of Rights Update is a public proposal for the rights, protections, and government standards Americans should be able to count on. It builds on existing constitutional protections and sets out fifteen principles for discussion and improvement.

1. Leadership Renewal and Accountability

Public institutions should provide credible opportunities for renewal while retaining the competence needed to govern.

Proposed direction. Develop prospective age and term limits with publicly justified thresholds, workable transitions, and attention to voter choice. Assess leadership renewal separately from financial-integrity reforms.

Open questions. No numerical age cutoff has been selected. Federal congressional qualification changes require a constitutional analysis; ordinary statutes cannot simply add qualifications. Consider expertise, voter choice, and enforcement.

2. Taxes People Can Understand

Ordinary taxpayers should be able to meet their obligations accurately without excessive time, expense, or uncertainty.

Proposed direction. Provide a simple, free filing route for ordinary situations and optional prefilled information that people can correct. Reduce overlapping provisions and unclear notices. Set a decision deadline for reviewing and simplifying the code, with a workable transition.

Open questions. Compare administrative improvements with broader code replacement. Disclose revenue and distributional effects, and establish continuity before any sunset. A deadline should produce a usable replacement.

3. Clear Reasons and a Fair Appeal

People should understand consequential decisions affecting them and have a practical opportunity to challenge errors.

Proposed direction. Provide clear reasons, accessible records, and timely appeals for consequential government decisions. Make review understandable and available to people who cannot navigate complex procedures unaided.

Open questions. Define which decisions qualify, reasonable timelines, assistance, and remedies. Review must be meaningful without creating unmanageable delays.

Evidence and proposed measures for each principle appear in the website and plain-text edition. The companion research brief identifies sources and limits on claims of consensus.

The Fifteen Principles

4. Visible Political Funding and Influence

People should be able to see the significant sources of money and influence behind public decisions.

Proposed direction. Make significant political funding and relevant conflicts accessible in clear, searchable records. Develop timely disclosure requirements and practical rules against evasion.

Open questions. Define disclosure thresholds, covered activity, enforcement, and protections for legitimate privacy and association. Visibility must be useful to ordinary readers.

5. Healthcare People Can Use

Everyone should be able to obtain necessary care through understandable coverage, with protection against financially devastating bills.

Proposed direction. Simplify enrollment and keep coverage continuous when work or family circumstances change. Standardize core billing, claims, and appeals. Compare public, private, and mixed financing against access to care and total household costs.

Open questions. The benefit standard, financing model, provider capacity, and protection from major bills still need to be defined and costed. Simpler administration alone cannot fund universal coverage.

6. Equal Treatment and Personal Freedom

Everyone should receive equal protection and respect for personal freedoms under consistently applied rules.

Proposed direction. Protect expression, conscience, religion, peaceful association, and due process. Apply public standards consistently, including when political leadership changes. Keep emergency powers time-limited and independently reviewable.

Open questions. Specific disputes involving competing rights require their own careful assessment. A broad statement of principle does not settle every application.

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7. Public Office Without Financial Conflicts

Public decisions should serve the public, with enforceable limits on personal financial conflicts.

Proposed direction. Restrict individual-stock trading by covered officials, prevent evasion through related accounts, and establish clear disclosure and recusal rules. Define permitted diversified investments and practical transition periods.

Open questions. Specify which officials and related accounts are covered, who enforces the rules, and what remedies apply. Rules must be workable and applied consistently.

8. Safe Communities and Accountable Enforcement

People should be able to live safely and rely on public-safety institutions that respect their rights.

Proposed direction. Support effective emergency response, assistance for victims, accessible treatment, and accountable enforcement. Evaluate prevention and response together, using clear evidence of results.

Open questions. Specific interventions, resources, and oversight arrangements remain open. Assess safety outcomes alongside civil rights and local needs.

9. Privacy and Accountable Technology

People should have meaningful control over personal information and practical remedies when technology causes harm.

Proposed direction. Establish understandable rules for collecting, sharing, correcting, and deleting data, with stronger protection for children. Require appropriate oversight of government access and explanations and human review for consequential automated decisions.

Open questions. Define exceptions, enforcement, and review duties. Balance privacy, security, access, and the cost of compliance.

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The Fifteen Principles

10. Government Services That Work

People should receive dependable public services with clear standards, trackable progress, and accessible help.

Proposed direction. Publish processing times and results. Provide trackable applications and human assistance. Reduce duplicate paperwork while protecting personal information, and measure service quality alongside speed.

Open questions. Establish agency baselines, staffing needs, legal authority, and implementation costs. Faster processing should also remain accurate and accessible.

11. Honest Budgets and Fiscal Accountability

Public commitments should come with understandable costs, credible assumptions, and responsibility for results.

Proposed direction. Disclose the costs and assumptions behind spending and tax changes, including financing and effects on different households. Plan continuity for essential services during budget disputes. Review actual results against promised benefits.

Open questions. Choose reporting standards, review responsibilities, and continuity arrangements. Identify tradeoffs explicitly; none of the proposals should be presented as cost-free.

12. Clear Prices and Fair Transactions

People should understand the full price and obligations of a transaction before committing to it.

Proposed direction. Disclose mandatory charges and recurring payments clearly. Make cancellation reasonably straightforward and provide workable remedies for fraud and billing errors. Apply requirements proportionately so small businesses can comply.

Open questions. Inventory existing protections, identify enforcement gaps, and assess compliance burdens before proposing additional rules.

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13. Housing and Infrastructure That Meet Public Needs

Communities should be able to provide sufficient housing and dependable infrastructure through predictable, accountable decisions.

Proposed direction. Coordinate permit reviews and remove unnecessary construction barriers while maintaining meaningful safety and environmental protections. Assess local capacity, maintenance costs, and effects on existing residents.

Open questions. Select specific review bottlenecks and financing options. Preserve meaningful local input and evaluate affordability alongside supply and service reliability.

14. Education That Opens Practical Opportunities

Every student should have a strong foundation for adult life and credible routes into further learning and work.

Proposed direction. Prioritize literacy, numeracy, civics, and practical financial and digital skills. Support effective routes through trades, apprenticeships, college, and employment. Make costs and outcomes understandable.

Open questions. Preserve room for local decisions and students with different needs. Choose measures that reflect real learning and opportunity, rather than narrow targets alone.

15. Workable and Fair Immigration

Immigration rules should be enforceable, decisions timely, and legal pathways responsive to legitimate needs.

Proposed direction. Pair effective border and workplace administration with practical legal routes. Give applicants clear requirements, fair procedures, and timely decisions. Consider labor demand, humanitarian obligations, and community capacity together.

Open questions. Define the specific package, staffing, error correction, and legal pathways. Agreement on one component does not settle asylum, deportation, or visa totals.

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