A Bill of Economic Rights and Obligations
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Preamble

Our nation was founded on the idea that we are all created equal, that we are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In living, expressing our liberty, and pursuing happiness we sometimes conflict with one another, so we need a shared understanding of the extent of the sphere of equal rights given to every person, and beyond that sphere our obligation to respect the rights of others. This Bill is concerned with the economic aspects of these rights and obligations.

Article 1: Each person has the right to decide whether and how to use his or her talents. Those who are self-employed have a right to the full economic product of their efforts. Those who are employed by others have a right to the full amount of the compensation that their employers agree to pay them. Thus Congress and state legislatures shall levy no tax on wages or interest or spending.

Article 2: Each person has an obligation to abide by governmental regulations that are designed to prevent an unreasonable risk of uncompensable harm. Each person has an obligation to compensate others for the compensable harms that are caused by his or her actions, except when the harm is caused by the assertion of equal rights or legitimate competition. Congress and state legislatures shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Article 3: All persons, in all generations, have equal rights to natural opportunities, such as the use of land, natural resources, and the frequency spectrum. Therefore Congress shall place levies on states to equalize among states the per capita annual value of access to natural opportunities, and to compensate for the harmful effects of activities in states on other states and on future generations. State legislatures shall place corresponding levies on their subdivisions.

Article 4: Congress may place levies on states to collect from states a portion of the benefits they receive from national defense, national systems of infrastructure, research of national significance, or any private activity that has widespread public benefits. State legislatures may place corresponding levies on their subdivisions.

Article 5: People have the right to form communities and local governments that express their shared sense of community, and that provide the public services that they wish to provide for themselves. Through their local governments, people have the right to impose upon themselves and their fellow citizens any regulations and any taxes of their choice.

Article 6: People have the right to trade freely with persons in all other localities, subject only to restrictions of the localities of the trading persons. Every locality has an obligation to allow goods to pass freely through its territory, except that, to the extent that the passage of goods causes cost, those costs may be recovered.

Article 7: Congress and state legislatures shall make no law limiting the right of the people to use anything they wish as a medium of exchange.

Commentary

This bill of economic rights and obligations is designed to end the struggle for domination through government policy, and thereby free to the people from the tyranny of governments. Instead of fighting for the chance to impose our will on one another, we would agree that all have equal rights; no one is to be in a position of privilege. From its Latin origin, a privilege is a "private law," a law with someone's name on it, a law that permits someone to do what others may not do. We should agree to eschew privilege.

Article 1 says that we have a right to what we produce: as workers, as entrepreneurs and as savers. Neither Congress or state legislatures may tax this income, or our corresponding spending. While they may not levy taxes on these things, Article 3 says that Congress and state legislatures are required to place levies on states and state subdivisions respectively, to equalize the per capita annual value of access to natural opportunities, to compensate for the harms that activities in states cause for other states, and to compensate for losses to future generations. Article 4 permits Congress and state legislature to finance activities that have benefits beyond a single subdivision, but only by levies on subdivisions, not by taxes on persons.

Communities are allowed to have whatever taxes and regulations their citizens choose. Anyone who is dissatisfied can live elsewhere. While communities would be permitted to tax wages and interest if they wished, they would find it attractive to do so only if their citizens were content with such sharing. The primary source of financing for communities would be the rental value of land and other natural opportunities. Because the provision of a worthwhile local public good generally raises rent by enough to pay for the good, communities would generally be able to finance themselves with only a fraction of the rent of land. The rest of rent could provide as a basic income for all.

Support for those who are unable to provide for themselves would come from this basic income, from the generosity of the fellow citizens of their community, and from insurance that their parents might reasonable be expected to provide for them in a world in which all parents received justice themselves.

While the bill of economic rights and obligations does not address the issue explicitly, it should be understood that people have a right to redress for past injustice, no matter how far back in the past. If some persons have inferior starting positions because they are the descendants of slaves who, because of that status, were unable to provide what others provided to their children, then there should be a levy on the property of the descendants of slave-owners to rectify that injustice.

In fulfilling its obligation to ensure that future generations had opportunities at least as great as those of the present generation, people would want to take account of:

1. The amount of land per capita, adjusted for the quality of land;
2. The level of technology that will be available;
3. The education and any initial wealth that is provided to all children;
4. The level of public infrastructure;
5. The level of public debt;
6. Environmental quality;
7. The price of depletable natural resources.

Decreases in some items could be offset by increases in others. If people wanted to have more children than could be provided with opportunities equal to those of the present generation, Congress and state legislatures would have an obligation to tax those who wanted to have children, so that people would have fewer children, and so that all children could be provided with an initial endowment upon attaining maturity, to compensate for reductions in other items on the list.