

From: John Locke's *Second Treatise on Government*, 1689

To understand Political Power right, and derive it from its Original, we must consider what State all Men are naturally in, and that is, a *State of perfect Freedom* to order their Actions, and dispose of their Possessions, and Persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the Law of Nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the Will of any other Man.

But though this be a *State of Liberty*, yet it is *not a State of Licence*, though Man in that State have an uncontrollable Liberty, to dispose of his Person or Possessions, yet he has not Liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any Creature in his Possession, but where some nobler use, than its bare Preservation calls for it. The *State of Nature* has a Law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one: And Reason, which is that Law, teaches all Mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his Life, Health, Liberty, or Possessions...

'Tis often asked as a mighty Objection, *Where are, or ever were, there any Men in such a State of Nature?* ...For 'tis not every Compact that puts an end to the State of Nature between Men, but only this one of agreeing together mutually to enter into one Community, and make one Body Politick; other Promises and Compacts, Men may make one with another, and yet still be in the State of Nature...

Every Man being, as has been shewed, *naturally free*, and nothing being able to put him into subjection to any Earthly Power, but only his own Consent...Those who say otherwise, speak as if the Prince had a distinct and separate Interest from the good of the Community, and was not made for it... And indeed if that be so, the People under his Government are not a Society of Rational Creatures entered into a Community for their mutual good; they are not such as have set Rulers over themselves, to guard, and promote that good; but are to be looked on as an Herd of inferiour Creatures, under the Dominion of a Master, who keeps them, and works them for his own Pleasure or Profit...

John Locke was one of the key figures of the Enlightenment and a major influence on the American founding fathers, especially Thomas Jefferson. He is widely considered the originator of liberalism as a political philosophy and his writings on government are still considered essential for understanding the nature of elected government.

Republicanism: *political ideology that holds that a political system must be founded upon the rule of law, the rights of individuals, and the sovereignty of the people. Central to this is the notion that all leadership must be elected by the people who consent to the laws passed by continuing to vote for their representatives (or not). It is also closely connected to the idea of civic virtue, the responsibility citizens owe to their republic, and to opposition to corruption, or the use of public power to benefit the politician.*