

What is a Progressive?

1. Progressives believe that everyone deserves a roof over their head, a living wage, access to food, decent education, health care, and, in the event of old age or disability, a safety net.

A. unions & other labor empowering movements are encouraged by progressives.

B. Clean, healthy food protected by a strong FDA is a right, not a privilege. Bioengineered food, seeds, abuse of pesticides, the encroachment of agri-business on small farmers is a concern to progressives.

C. All children are entitled to a decent education in a clean, comfortable classroom; not just the children who live in upscale neighborhoods. Teachers should be paid generously because education is the key to a mentally and emotionally healthy society that will sustain democracy.

D. All people should have access to healthcare, no matter where you are on the economic scale. Healthcare should be a right, not a privilege.

E. Disability and old age isn't a sin. We should happily care for those who aren't able to care for themselves.

2. Progressives believe that faith is your own business. The state isn't to mandate how, when, where, or if you choose to worship. Therefore, the Progressive, like our founding fathers, believes that church and state should be separate. The existence of similar morals in the rule of law to those found in religions isn't evidence that the founding fathers meant religion to be an active part of government. There is no evidence that a non-religious person can't be a moral being.

3. Women should have the final say about what is to be done with their bodies in the event of pregnancy. Women should have easy access to all forms of family planning and counseling, if requested. Women shouldn't be denied employment opportunities because they have a womb. Progressives work to see to it that women have equal access to good wages and equal treatment. This isn't, as James Brown sings, "A man's world." It belongs to all of us and none of us.

4. Gay people should have the same rights as everyone else, including the right to marry.

5. The environment should be treated with respect and restraint. Conservation should always be a guiding principle in everything we do. Corporations need to be regulated and taught how to pattern themselves so that they follow environmentally friendly agendas. People also need to take personal responsibility for their impact on the environment. Hopefully, education and public pressure would do most of the work in that regard.

Progressives work to encourage everyone to discover ways of existing that will keep our planet thriving and healthy for years to come. Clean air, water, soil conservation (rather than desertification), discovering and removing toxins, protecting endangered species and their habitats, are all examples of environmental concerns. Alternative energies as opposed to the dependence on coal and oil. Progressives accept the word of most scientists, that global warming is a serious threat. America should participate in Kyoto, not walk away. Corporate automakers should be allowed and encouraged to create alternative energy vehicles. Tax incentives should be given to energy friendly vehicles, not to Hummers.

6. Although, it is wonderful to feel loyalty to one's nation and its people, Progressives feel that an important part of national pride is being a good "citizen of the world." We do not condone our country going to war for colonial interests or for empire-building. We believe that we can accomplish practically anything through diplomatic channels. War and killing should only be a last resort. To that end, we believe that a department of peace makes even more sense than a department of war. We believe that the US should be working towards the elimination of nuclear, biological, etc. weapons throughout the world. We should include ourselves in this plan. We should sign up with the World Court, so that we too can be held accountable for our actions. We need to help in parts of the world where people are being treated with brutality. Like in Rwanda, Sudan, Palestine. We don't believe our government should interfere or place sanctions on countries just because they haven't made it convenient for our

corporations to exploit their poor people.

7. Globalism means being a citizen of the world, not sending our corporations overseas to exploit cheap labor. Progressives question what needs to be exported and imported. What is reasonable? Does it make sense to spew oil and gas into the environment from ships to carry products over here that we can make or grow here ourselves? Progressives feel we need to bring these concerns to the table. The bottomline of civilization is more important than the bottomline of corporations. Progressives want to see equity for all people's of the world and we question the integrity of the new institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

8. Accountability and democracy. Politicians are supposed to represent the people. Currently, the politicians represent their "paymasters," as Ralph Nader puts it. Progressives are working to remedy an elective process gone awry. We need to get the big money out of politics. There are a number of ways this can be accomplished and progressives need to push those agendas. Meanwhile, Progressives need to let the current politicians know that corporations aren't "people." WE ARE THE PEOPLE.

9. Progressives believe that the government should be there to inable and protect through collective agreement and mutual support. Government should not interfere in our personal lives. Government doesn't have the right to look in our mail, have access to our medical records, tell us how to treat our bodies, prevent us from pulling the plug when we are tired of being sick, etc. However, because government is there "for us," government itself needs to be transparent. We should be able to have access to records of what government is up to. Government should always be accountable to the people. Progressives question creations like the CIA and are skeptical about giving these government entities too much privacy, privilege, and power.

10. Progressives believe that all creatures deserve respect and kindness. If animals are to be used as food, we should treat them as kindly as possible until their demise. Animals used for scientific experimentation should be limited and monitored for kindness. Keeping animals in tiny cages, etc. for flippant experimentations is barbaric. Keeping animals in filthy, cramped environments, forced feeding, and other forms of torture should be discouraged and banned. Wild horses are a national heritage and should be protected from overharvesting by the meat industry. Hunting and fishing should be regulated, but not banned.

11. Progressives feel that all people are precious. The person who cleans the toilets in the hospital lavatory is just as important as the noble laureate. We all play a useful, genuine, and valuable role in the tapestry of life. We all deserve respect and peace of mind. We honor and celebrate each and every thread in this tapestry. By the same token, human life is precious. The death penalty reduces us to the same barbarism of which we accuse the condemned. Our prison systems are overloaded with people whose biggest crime is being poor and uneducated. We need to change that.

12, Progressives have a proud history. Just about everything that America is proud of came from someone in the progressive movement (although it may have not been called "progressive" at the time). Being a Progressive is being someone who cares about the common person. Who cares about the integrity of the world we live in. Who respects the land and it's creatures. Who respects people of all colors, religions, and cultures. Progressives welcome diversity and consensus. We see the world as fragile and fluid. We are like a tiny ship on a vast ocean. Each of us, taking our turn, acting as a rudder, moving us in the magical journey towards a shared world of hope, love, and joy.