



Published for friends and supporters of the Libertarian Party

# Liberty Pledge

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1995

Libertarian Party National Headquarters ♦ 1528 Pennsylvania Avenue SE ♦ Washington DC 20003 ♦ (202) 543-1988

## LP enjoys wave of nationwide publicity

*Libertarians “ride the wave” as the future of American politics*

The Libertarian Party received an unprecedented outpouring of national publicity in the last month or so — appearing in books, newspapers, and magazines across the country and across the political spectrum.

**JULY 25TH:** An article distributed nationally by Hearst Newspapers took Republicans and Democrats to task for ballot access laws that tried to “limit access for third-party or independent challengers,” and quoted LP Director of Communications Bill Winter.

**JULY 24TH:** The Libertarian Party was the cover story in *Insight* magazine, a nationally distributed weekly news magazine with a circulation of about 100,000. The four-page article, entitled “Libertarians Ride the Wave,” was described by LP activists as “accurate and upbeat,” and featured sidebars on the LP platform, Harry Browne, and the Cato Institute. “It is the first cover story about the LP in a national news magazine in the history of the party,” said LP National Chair Steve Dasbach.

**JULY 24TH:** A front-page story about ballot access barriers appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor*, a nationwide newspaper. The article suggested that the recent flurry of new ballot access laws were motivated by Republicans and Democrats interested in “protecting their jobs.” It also quoted Winter, and said the LP was “the closest thing to a real third party that exists in the US today.”

**JULY 26TH:** The LP was the focus of a front-page article in *USA Today* entitled “The GenX Philosophy: Many reject politics, lean libertarian,” which declared: “What liberalism was to the Sixties and conservatism was to the Eighties, libertarianism may be to the youth of the 1990s.” The article continued: “Many of the 41 million members of Generation X are turning to an old philosophy that suddenly seems new; libertarianism, a mixture of liberal views on social issues and a conservative bent on pocket-book concerns.”

**JULY 30TH:** The Libertarian Party was featured in a nationally syndicated column from Clarence Page, who declared: “The New Generation is fed up with government, Washington, and the two major parties.”

**AUGUST:** *The Utne Journal* — a magazine described as the “alternative *Readers Digest*” — featured an article entitled “Libertarians on the March.” The piece, written from a

left-wing alarmist viewpoint, noted: “Libertarian ideas are being discussed seriously in the New Washington.”

**AUGUST:** A new book, *Politics on the Net*, published by Que books, mentioned the Libertarian Party’s World Wide Web site. “The book is designed as a non-partisan look at the political resources available on the Internet and the major online services,” said author Bill Mann. The LP’s WWW page, created and maintained by LP activist Joe Dehn, is profiled on page 61 of the book.

**AUGUST:** Fifty-three Libertarian computer bulletin boards were listed in *Boardwatch* magazine, a nationwide magazine for BBS operators. The article noted the wide-open, libertarian orientation of the Internet and other new technologies, and said, “Small wonder that Libertarians are attracted to — and perhaps born in — the online world.”

## LP members nearly succeed in ending Selective Service

Several Libertarian Party members were instrumental in a lobbying effort that fell just short of abolishing the \$25 million Selective Service System last month. But Scott Kohlhaas, the Executive Director of Volunteers for America (VFA), says they’ll try again next year.

In early July, VFA won a major victory when a Veterans Administration/Housing & Urban Development subcommittee “zeroed out” the Selective Service from the budget. But, just days later, the full House Appropriations Committee restored the money at the urging of Rep. Gerald Solomon (R-NY) on “patriotic” grounds.

“We won’t give up,” promised Kohlhaas, who is also the Membership Coordinator of the National Libertarian Party. “We made more progress this year than ever before. We’ll be back next year to try again.”

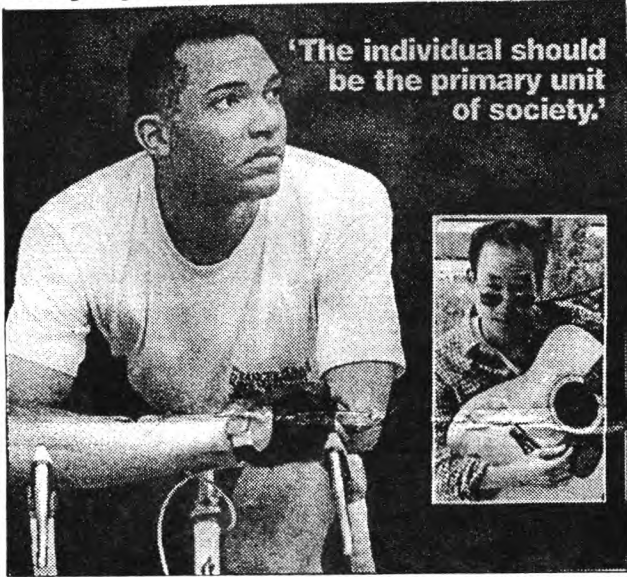
VFA is headquartered in Washington, DC, and also includes Libertarian National Committee member Don Ernsberger, who was active in the lobbying effort.

The VFA worked with conservatives who opposed Selective Services on fiscal grounds, “conscientious objector” liberals who opposed the military draft on moral grounds, and the Republican Liberty Caucus.

Although there is currently no military draft, the Selective Service still spends \$25 million per year to register young men ages 18 to 25.

# THE GENX PHILOSOPHY

Many reject party politics, lean libertarian



**'The individual should be the primary unit of society.'**



Above by Robert Deutsch, inset by Tim Dillon, USA TODAY  
**MOVING AND SHAKING:** 23-year-old Stanley Rowe, above, works for a bank in New York and mentors Harlem schoolchildren. Frederick Pyen, 27, inset, is an account executive in Washington who was a Republican and is now a Democrat with a libertarian bent on some issues.

## COVER STORY

# Sixties' legacy: 'This monstrous bureaucracy'



By Tim Dillon, USA TODAY  
**MAURA WHALEN:** Bemoans big brother

By Deirdre R. Schwiesow  
 USA TODAY

Generation X has had enough of baby boom politics. As disillusioned twentysomethings see it, Democrats have buried them under \$5 trillion of debt to support social programs that failed. Republicans want to intrude upon their private lives by censoring the Internet, restricting abortions and arresting pot smokers.

So many of the 41 million members of Generation X — the so-called baby busters born from 1965 to 1976 — are turning to an old philosophy that suddenly seems new: libertarianism, a mixture of liberal views on social issues and a conservative bent on pocketbook concerns.

"The old left-right paradigm is not working anymore," says Douglas Coupland, author of *Generation X*, the novel that gave the group its name. "Coming down the pipe are an extraordinarily large number of fiscal conservatives who are socially left."

What liberalism was to the Sixties and conservatism was to the Eighties, libertarianism may be to the youth of the 1990s — the *de facto* philosophy of a generation steeped in the precepts of latch-key self-reliance and the individual freedoms of the Internet.

"I don't think there's a lot of difference between Democrats and Republicans," says Maura Whalen, 27, a radio producer in Washington, D.C. "They both want government to perform functions that it has no business performing."

"In the Sixties, (youth) asked the same government that had been oppressing them to solve all of their problems. This monstrous bureaucracy that we have today is their legacy, it's their Frankenstein."

Though its numbers are minuscule compared to the na-

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## COVER STORY

# Computer culture encodes GenX ideals

Continued from 1A

tion's two dominant political parties, the Libertarian Party has seen a 20% growth in membership this year, to 13,000 dues-paying members. Gene Cisewski, a party official, estimates as many as 40% of the newcomers are people in their 20s.

But the Generation X libertarian mood extends beyond the organized political movement, reflecting a general disenchantment with the giant governmental institutions created by their parents.

Generation X has less faith in any kind of government than baby boomers do, whether it's the presidency or police. USA TODAY/CNN/Gallup polls show. But twentysomethings have more faith in private institutions, including big business.

They also sympathize more with budget cuts that cross traditional liberal-conservative lines. They want to cut defense and social programs.

But they're turned off by politics: In 1994, they were only one-third as likely to vote as their parents.

And many Generation X members are stridently apolitical.

Allen St. Pierre, 29, quit his paralegal job at a major law firm to fight marijuana prohibition, working at the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML). He's not a Libertarian Party member, and he doesn't identify with any political party.

"I don't want to find myself narrowed," he says, a common Generation X refrain. But he adds, "Everybody in this country who enjoys the freedoms we do have is a libertarian, whether they know it or not."

Take Stanley Rowe, 23, from the Democratic union town of Saginaw, Mich., and Ivy Clothier, 21, from a Kansas Republican family.

In Saginaw, Rowe saw people look to government to improve their lives — and it didn't get them anywhere. "It just didn't make sense," he says. "The individual should be the primary unit of society."

In Rowe, left has met right: He got a business degree from the University of Pennsylvania and now works at Bankers Trust in New York. In his spare time, he mentors Harlem schoolchildren.

Clothier went to a conservative private high school. "Everyone I ever knew was a Republican," she says. She works two jobs to put herself through the University of Kansas. "If I can do it, then I think most anyone can," she says.

But her conservative rhetoric stops at social issues, such as censorship of the Internet — the medium of choice for Generation X.

"E-mail is like a personal letter," Clothier says. "You can't have people searching your mail."

They don't need interference from their elders, either. Twentysomethings say they can parent themselves, thank you, and don't need the government to do it. The two-career households and broken marriages of their parents made Generation X self-reliant.

"The one thing that people in their

## Some tenets of libertarian line

**What is a libertarian?**  
 Libertarians say government should play a minimal role.

**They're skeptical of government spending, whether for big welfare programs or big military programs. And libertarians don't like government butting into private lives, whether it's harassing gays or controlling firearms.**

**This mix of fiscal conservatism and social liberalism often confuses people. But to libertarians, it's just an extension of Thomas Jefferson's maxim: Government which governs least, governs best.**

**Although libertarianism blossomed in the 18th century, the Libertarian Party wasn't founded until 1971, during Generation X's birth. It now has about 150 local officeholders. Its 1992 presidential candidate, Andre Marrou, received 291,627 votes (0.03%).**

**What libertarians believe:**

▶ **Economy.** A free market; minimal regulation; low taxes.

▶ **Civil liberties.** Free speech, even for pornographers, flag burners and religious extremists.

▶ **Social policy.** Legalize drugs; no gun control; no military draft.

▶ **Foreign policy.** Keep out of other countries' affairs.

**Some jokes libertarians tell:**

▶ **How many libertarians does it take to screw in a light bulb?**  
 None, the market will take care of it.

▶ **What's the libertarian salad?**  
 Lettuce alone.

twenties have in common is that they're far more likely than people in any other generation to have grown up with divorced parents," says Virginia Postrel, editor of Reason, a libertarian magazine. "That would tend to make you less likely to believe promises of any sort, and more likely to feel you need to be self-reliant."

Rowe, whose parents divorced when he was in 8th grade, says, "People are beginning to realize that they can't depend on the people they depended on in the past."

Generation X was raised in a culture that arguably is more diverse. They've been exposed to different races, sexual orientations and sex roles since their births.

Young people today are more tolerant than in the past, says Richard Cowan, 54, who runs NORML. "If you combine social tolerance with skepticism about government and then a belief in free markets — that's the essence of libertarianism."

Moreover, the computer culture — especially the Internet — has accustomed twentysomethings to a libertarian world where individualism is paramount and government just gets in the way.

Coupland, whose new novel, *Microserfs*, documents computer indus-

try twentysomethings, says the Internet "promotes talking, but it doesn't promote agreement, so it's the ideal medium for libertarians."

Libertarians have discussion groups, Web sites and bulletin boards on the Net, covering topics from drug-law reform to religion and the state. It's an alternative way for Generation X to access information, bypassing commercial media.

Whalen, the radio producer, says this makes the Internet "a libertarian fantasy. It's a world without borders, where people are free to interact financially and socially without government interference."

But their computers haven't cut them off from society. GenX libertarians want to dispel the stereotype that they just don't care about anyone but themselves.

"Our generation has been slandered," says Jesse Markowitz, 28, chair of the Libertarian Party of Maryland. "I find people who care deeply about race issues, about poverty, about the environment. People want to make a difference, but they look at the established political structure and they're not interested."

Frederick Pyen, 27, an account executive in Washington, D.C., embraced his parents' Republican beliefs as a teen. Then he was a socialist. Now, he considers himself a Democrat, but with a libertarian bent on such issues as the flag-burning amendment.

"It's sad," Pyen says, that "politicians have such little respect for the Constitution that they're willing to fool around with it to win an election. It's such a waste of time and energy and resources."

Camille Paglia, a Philadelphia college professor and best-selling author, sees a libertarian trend among twentysomethings she teaches.

"The young are very turned off by what they see as business as usual in the Democratic and Republican parties," Paglia says. "They are starting to break through into something new for the 21st century."

Given his experience, Kevin Scheunemann has come to agree. Several years ago, he was picking up ice-cream cakes for his job at Dairy Queen when the police pulled him over for violating a ban on "cruising" in downtown West Bend, Wis.

Scheunemann, now 23, was incensed, not only that he was hassled for nothing, but that tax money and police time were wasted to do it.

He organized a protest — 500 cars brought traffic to a standstill. Now, the state Supreme Court is debating cruising bans.

At the protest, several Libertarians introduced themselves to Scheunemann, and his involvement led to a 1993 run for the state Assembly on the Libertarian ticket, garnering him a surprising 12% of the vote.

He plans to run for office again. Scheunemann — now buying his own Dairy Queen franchise — is part politician, part entrepreneur.

Generation X — he promises — "is going to start tearing down government. We're going to see a massive shift in the next few years."

## ▼ The Birmingham News

Birmingham, Alabama, July 22, 1995

# Alabama Libertarians get 1996 ballot access

The Alabama Libertarian Party has been granted ballot access for the 1996 election cycle.

Secretary of State Jim Bennett granted the party access earlier this week, after his office verified more than the minimum number of required signatures on the Libertarian petition.

To successfully petition for ballot access, the party needed to present signatures of at least 1 percent of those who cast a vote for governor in Alabama's 1994 general election. By Thursday, 12,565 signatures on the petition had been verified.

Party members filed a petition with Bennett's office on May 1, saying it contained 23,110 signatures.



# State Libertarian Party chief visits Hazleton

By ED CONRAD  
Standard-Speaker Staff Writer

The state chairman of the Libertarian Party visited Hazleton Thursday and brought with him a lot of optimism, patience and perseverance.

Ken Sturzenacker of North Catasauqua admits that the party, organized in 1971, is still fighting to gain public acceptance but is buoyed by the belief that favorable changes are in the wind.

"The odds are still very long but they're shortening," he said. "All kinds of encouraging things are going on."

"The party continues to grow and, although membership is still small, it's double what it was a year ago. And already we're on the ballot in 25 states for next year, which is more than all the other (third parties) combined."

Sturzenacker, who earns no salary as state party chairman, needed little persuading to sing the praises of the Libertarian philosophy.

"What distinguishes us from all the other parties?" he asked. "We don't believe in the initiation of force to achieve social or political goals. Everybody else wants to use the power of government."

"We believe, as long as a person's actions are peaceful and honest and in volunteer coopera-

tion with others, nobody outside that relationship is allowed to interfere with it."

Sturzenacker, who is single and employed in advertising sales in the Lehigh Valley, contends that the present form of government is too big.

The Libertarian Party favors increasing individual liberties by limiting government activities and combining a liberal view on personal freedoms with conservative economic beliefs.

Libertarians believe that government is the main threat to individual liberties and therefore strongly support the repeal of most laws that limit freedom of personal behavior.

They also feel many government policies should be applied by private firms instead.

Sturzenacker said that if the Libertarian Party had its say, the federal government would be "far, far smaller — only one-third or one-fourth its present size."

He said it would offer "far less opportunity for corruption," and there would be far fewer lobbyists running around seeking favors from politicians that satisfy their own ends and not the public's.

Libertarians oppose government aid to — and regulation of — business and favor a neutral foreign policy for the U.S., including withdrawal from the United Nations, and an end to any

U.S. military role abroad.

Libertarians insist the only function of government should be one of defense against internal and external aggression.

The party favors much lower taxes, less regulation of business, and more reliance on charitable — rather than government — welfare.

Libertarians believe that state control of all businesses should be ended and replaced with a free market economy. They favor independent, competing schools where parents spend money in support of the school of their choice.

"Americans put very little trust in government or politicians — and with good reason," according to party literature. "For several decades the politicians in Washington and our state capitals have led us away from the principles of individual liberty and personal responsibility which are the only sound foundation for just, humane and abundant society."

"Americans want — and deserve — a political system which respects them as unique individuals; a system which respects them as people who can make their own plans; who can take responsibility for themselves; who are compassionate; and who can — and will — solve their own problems if allowed to do so."

Sturzenacker said the Liber-

tarian Party offers all that — and more.

"The challenge is to persuade people they can make a difference if they want to," he said.

"What people are beginning to understand . . . (big) government doesn't work. What does it do effectively? From our standpoint, whatever the government does can be done in the private sector while eliminating incredible expenses which have to be borne by taxpayers."

He pointed out that the average American has been working since Jan. 1 just to pay next year's taxes and, in fact, won't have paid off next year's tax bill until next week.

Sturzenacker was visiting northeastern Pennsylvania to organize registered Libertarian members in Luzerne County.

"There are 70 to 80 registered Libertarians in the county and, since many of them live miles apart, a lot of them don't even know each other," he explained. "We're now at the point of getting organized and trying to get them together."

"We're identifying where they are and how active they're prepared to be."

For more information about the Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania contact Sturzenacker at 800-774-4487 or write to him at Box 4451, Allentown, Pa., 18105.



Ken Sturzenacker

## CLARENCE PAGE

The New Generation is fed up with government, Washington and the two major political parties.

The New Generation wants to be left alone to make a little money, hang out in espresso shops and surf the Internet.

All of this comes from Douglas Coupland, who should know since he is the author of "Generation X," the novel that gave the post-boomer generation that nickname.

"The old left-right paradigm is not working anymore," he told U.S.A. Today recently. "Coming down the pipe are an extraordinarily large number of fiscal conservatives who are socially left."

I call today's teen-to-30 cohort the New Generation because Mr. Coupland announced earlier this year that "Gen X" is dead and, well, I have to call them something.

Conveniently, Mr. Coupland made this pronouncement just in time to promote his new novel, "Microserfs," and conveniently, a new set of New Generation catchphrases. If anybody tells you the New Generation is too hip to fall for marketing, don't believe it.

Anyway, the New Generation loves Pearl Jam, R.E.M. and Snoop Doggy Dogg, but it is not too keen on liberal fossils from the Motown and Jefferson Airplane generation and those before them who have left \$5 trillion in national debt. Nor do members of the New Generation like conservatives who call for curbs on abortions, recreational drugs or free expression in cyberspace.

Who do they like? Libertarians hope the New Generation likes

## Who gets the new generation vote?

them Bill Winter, communications director for the Libertarian Party, is delighted to agree with Mr. Coupland. The New Generation may be the most free-spirited and anti-government generation America has ever seen, which puts them right in bed philosophically with the Libertarians.

"Young people in the '60s might have been libertarian enough to oppose the draft and favor the legalization of marijuana, but they still viewed government as able to solve big problems through social engineering," says Mr. Winter. "Today's kids are more likely to think of government as having made things worse."

Could the New Generation be the death of government? I suspect not. Call me an old cynic, but I suspect the New Generation is merely waiting, like every seemingly apathetic generation that came before it, to hear politicians give an appealing answer to the fundamental political question "Where's mine?"

Most of Washington is too worried about older voters' issues like Social Security and high taxes for

one simple reason: Older voters vote three times more than young ones do.

Even the generation-war group "Lead or Leave," formed in 1992 to rally young voters against the burdens of seniors' entitlements was disbanded earlier this year when its founders said they wanted to pursue other pursuits. Ironically, they disbanded just as the Social Security and Medicare debates were beginning to heat up. Apparently young folks didn't care nearly as much about dismantling Social Security as older folks cared about saving it.

Social Security and Medicare never excited the young very much even in the days when young peo-

*The New Generation behaves much like we in the older generation behaved back when we were new or, at least, newer.*

ple believed more wholeheartedly in the promise of government. The New Generation has grown up in an era in which government spending has been too tight to have much direct impact on their lives. More than any previous American generation in memory, they have reasons to wonder how relevant government is to their lives.

But will young people do any-

thing about it? Young voters are notoriously apathetic when it comes to voting. In this regard, the New Generation behaves much like we in the older generation behaved back when we were new or, at least, newer.

When Bill Clinton and Al Gore made direct appeals to young voters through campus drives and MTV, among other channels, the turnout of 18- to 24-year-olds shot up to 37 percent in November 1992, according to Curtis Gans at the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate. That was one of their highest percentages since 1972 when 42 percent turned out to vote in the first presidential election in which 18-year-olds could vote.

Will such an appeal work next year? The new "motor voter" registration has boosted young first-time drivers' numbers on voter rolls, but that doesn't mean they will vote. Only 16 percent turned out in November, about the same 1990, the last off-year election.

A lot of young voters are said to be disillusioned by Mr. Clinton's failures to deliver for them, but if the Republicans shift too far to the right on social issues like abortion or censorship, they could energize a youthful backlash in Mr. Clinton's favor.

The youth vote is, as former presidential candidate Jesse Jackson used to say in the '80s, "like rocks laying on the ground." Will anyone pick them up? Now, that would be new.

Clarence Page is a nationally syndicated columnist

▲ *The Hazleton Standard-Speaker*  
Hazleton, Pennsylvania  
July 7, 1995

► *The Washington Times*  
Washington, DC  
August 2, 1995

▼ *The Benton County Daily Record*  
Bentonville, Arkansas  
July 19, 1995

# Libertarian Party of Arkansas elects officers, maps strategy

By GARY LOOKAOOD  
Daily Record staff

BENTONVILLE — Even though it was in existence before July 8, a political party in Arkansas counts its official beginning date as that day.

Members of the Libertarian Party of Arkansas met in Little Rock, electing new state officers and mapping out political strategies.

"What this meeting was all about was forming a state party.

... We have 20 (members) statewide. This is a new party," new chairman Robert Jones said.

Jones, a Rogers attorney and graduate of the University of Arkansas Law School, was unanimously elected state party chairman. He formally succeeded Matthew Richard of Little Rock.

At the Little Rock meeting, Jones outlined short-term objectives for the Libertarian Party of Arkansas, and also outlined

long-term plans.

Longer term plans include fielding of candidates at all levels, Jones said.

"Like any political party, the LPA ultimately wants to elect party members. What is unique about Libertarians is that we want to change the face of government. We will change the debate from how much or in what areas government should grow to actually cutting government at all levels. People are most ef-

ficient and most able to meet others' needs when government bureaucracies are out of the way," he said.

"Most people are libertarian in thinking — they just might not know it. Most every agrees that government, quite simply, doesn't work. Our objective should be to let every Arkansan know that there is a viable option to the two old parties, that there is a political party that stands for the principles of lim-

ited government and more personal responsibility," Jones said.

"Libertarians are practical people. We know we can't make the world perfect, but it can be better. The Libertarian way is a logically consistent approach to politics based on the moral principle of self-ownership. Each individual has the right to control

his or her own body, action, speech and property. We see government's only role as helping individuals defend themselves from force and fraud," he said.

Jones invited anyone interested to contact the Libertarian Party of Arkansas at P.O. Box 1989, Bentonville, Ark. 72712-1989.

► *The Christian Science Monitor*  
Boston, Massachusetts  
July 24, 1995

▼ *The Times Union*  
Albany, New York  
June 25, 1995

## Third Parties Running Out Of Time

By Peter Grier

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

**W**ASHINGTON **ATTENTION** Ross Perot, Jesse Jackson, Colin Powell, and other potential third-party or independent candidates for president: If you're going to do it, you'd better start soon. Playing coy may be fun, but today it's harder than ever to run for the White House if you're not the Republican or Democratic nominee.

Ballot access laws are a big reason why. Independent presidential candidates now need to collect at least 14 times as many petition signatures as major party counterparts to get their names on ballots nationwide.

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## Two-party system tries to save itself

■ Despite public preferences, lawmakers try to limit access of third-party or independent rivals

By Vic Ostrowidzki  
Times Union Washington bureau

WASHINGTON — Americans say they want more choices when they go into the voting booth, but Republicans and Democrats are trying to make it harder for independent or third-party candidates to get on the ballot.

"It's pretty depressing after years of improvement," says Richard Winger, who heads the San Francisco-based Coalition for Free and Open Elections, which monitors ballot access issues. "This is the worst year since 1971, when 11 states made it tougher for independents to run."

So far this year, three states have made ballot access more difficult, and three others are considering doing so. In another three states, efforts were made to tighten access rules but were defeated. And in one state, Maryland, an attempt to make access easier failed.

Alaska, Idaho and New Mexico have enacted restrictive ballot access laws, while Alabama, Illinois and Maine legislatures are looking at proposals to do the same.

Alaska moved up its deadline for independent-party candidates to file petitions from August to June, while Idaho has moved up its deadline from June to April. New Mexico doubled the number of signatures an independent or third-party candidate needs to get on the ballot. Now such a candidate must get signatures totaling 1 percent of the ballots cast in the last general election.

In Alabama, Democrats are trying to limit the time candidates have to gather petitions and to raise the number of signatures they need to get on the ballot from 1 percent to 5 percent of the votes cast in the last gubernatorial election.

Illinois lawmakers of both parties want to prohibit candidates from paying petition gatherers by the signature.

The Maine Legislature is considering a proposal to double to 8,000 the number of signatures for all ballot access petitions.

In Maryland, considered to have one of the most restrictive laws, the Legislature failed in March to reduce

the number of signatures that independent or third-party candidates must produce to seek office. The number now is about 70,000.

Gubernatorial vetoes stopped the legislatures of Georgia and Arizona from toughening access requirements. In Georgia, lawmakers passed a bill shortening the time by two months in which candidates could file petitions to run for office. In Arizona, the Legislature approved a measure to impose cumbersome requirements to register a third party and to run as a third-party candidate for governor or U.S. senator.

In New Hampshire, an attempt to require independent parties to register at least 1 percent of the state's voters to retain a place on the ballot was defeated last month.

"I think what's happening is a disgrace," says Curtis B. Gans, director of the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, a non-partisan think tank that keeps track of voter registration and participation.

Gans says American voters "are hungry for the possibility of other choices" and limiting those choices "undermines the political system."

Bill Winter, spokesman for the Libertarian Party, says the legislative efforts in the states are "a sign that establishment politicians are running scared, determined to strangle their competition. Both parties feel insecure."

For good reason. Over the last 30 years many Americans have abandoned their parties and enrolled as independents.

In 1966, 44.2 percent of eligible voters were enrolled Democrats, 25 percent were Republicans, and 3.9 percent independents. The remaining eligible voters didn't bother to enroll.

In 1994, the number of enrolled Democrats dropped to 31.5 percent, the number of Republicans declined to 22.6 percent, and the number of enrolled independents rose to 12.4 percent.

A recent survey by the Times Mirror Center for People and the Press shows that 57 percent of Americans say they would like to see the creation of a third political party.

## Third Parties in '96 Face Hurdles

**INDEPENDENTS** from page 1

It's a trend that's affecting all electoral levels. At a time when Americans are expressing unprecedented interest in independent politics, Republicans and Democrats have joined together in many states to make ballot access more difficult for third-party candidates up and down the slate, from governor to alderman.

"Access was slowly getting easier over the last 10 years, until this year. Then everything went into reverse," says Richard Winger, publisher of *Ballot Access News*, a San Francisco-based newsletter.

The legislatures of 13 states considered ballot-access bills judged "hostile" by Mr. Winger this year. Four passed. New Mexico, for instance, doubled the number of signatures minor party candidates need to qualify for ballots, to 1 percent of the state's last general election vote.

### The Perot factor

Call it the Perot Factor. Mr. Perot's vote-drawing success in the 1992 elections worried many Democratic and Republican party officials. Now the tiny Texas billionaire and his United We Stand America followers are weighing whether to form a full-blown third party. That threatens state-level incumbents from the major parties — perhaps causing them to look for ways of protecting their jobs.

"Whenever there has been a third-party threat — such as now with Perot or with George Wallace in the late '60s — many states pass laws making ballot access more difficult," says Clarence Evjen, an official with the Natural Law Party, a small political organization based in Fairfield, Iowa.

Hurdles to third-party political participation in America were already considerable. According to figures compiled by *Ballot Access News*, a Democratic candidate for president needs to collect 25,500 signatures to get on the ballot in all 50 states, plus the District of Columbia. A Republican needs 49,250. A third-party candidate needs 718,881.

If a fledgling United We Stand America party decides to put up candidates for the United States House of Representatives, it would need to collect 1.6 million signatures nationwide. The big two parties, by way of contrast, need collect only about 140,000.

So what? We're only talking about signatures here. Surely a few weekends in supermarket parking lots can pull in lots of names, for any potential candidate.

Not really. The collection of valid voter John Hancock is a serious and expensive concern in American politics. Consider the case of the Libertarians. Notwithstanding Ross Perot, they're the closest thing to a real third party that exists in the US today, having run 660 candidates in various elections in 1994.

"Most small parties don't have enough people to go out and collect all these signatures on a volunteer basis," says Bill Winter, a Libertarian Party spokesman.

They have to pay professional collectors, instead. That's expensive — typically, about a dollar per signature. In other words, if you want to run for president in



**COLIN POWELL:** Time is running out for potential third-party candidates for the 1996 elections, even for one as well-known as the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

all 50 states and it will cost you about \$700,000, before you pay for TV ads, polls, consultants, and image-enhancing flannel-based clothing.

"That is essentially a tax on third parties," says Mr. Winter, who notes that Perot was outspoken on the issue in 1992. "If these laws are so bad that a man with \$3 billion has to complain about them, what about less well-funded parties?"

Nor are signatures the only issue. Third-party activists complain of a host of other barriers, from the major to the minor. Many states force third-party and independent candidates to file for office much earlier than Democrats or Republicans, for instance.

Not all political analysts think this state of affairs is such a bad thing. By making the entry threshold for third parties relatively high, the US may avoid the fate of other democracies where parties splinter, and splinter again, creating cacophonous legislative gridlock.

As it stands, the Democratic and Republican parties act as a kind of filter, presenting voters with a limited number of candidates whose party affiliation acts as a shorthand identification of their beliefs. "There's a great deal of merit to the two-party system in its simplification of alternatives," says William Keefe, a professor of political science at the University of Pittsburgh.

### Whither Colin Powell?

What does all this mean for, say, Colin Powell? The retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs appears to be seriously considering some sort of political future. He remains coy in the face of supporter entreaties, neither discouraging them nor giving any indication he will definitely jump into the Oval Office race.

It means he should remember that talking about running for president outside of the two-party system is far easier than actually doing it. A man as well-known and respected as Mr. Powell could probably still mount a credible campaign — but times 'a wastin'.

"Every day he waits makes it more unlikely that he will be able to get on the ballot in all 50 states," says the Libertarian Party's Bill Winter.