



Alabama Liberty

Volume 13, Number 3 Summer 94

CONVENTION NEWS

The Alabama Libertarian Party held its 1994 convention at the Statehouse Inn in Montgomery on May 7. Speakers were Dr. Jimmy Blake, Barbara Vincent, Jon Griswold, Dr. Nancy Lord, and Tibor Machan who substituted for Jacob Homberger. Approximately 55 people attended.

The party elected the following new officers: Chairman, Michael Probst; Vice Chairman, Steve Dow; Secretary, Anemari Stancil; Treasurer, Bob Burns.

No candidates were nominated at the convention. The ALP is not expected to get on the ballot state-wide, but members were encouraged to run for local offices, especially for the State House, where a candidate can get on the ballot as either a Libertarian or an independent with a petition containing 116 valid signatures.

The party members voted to support initiative, referendum, and recall by a vote of 19 to 4 with several members abstaining. One of the strongest supporters was attorney Michael Siebert from Huntsville. He cited from his experiences in the courtroom that IRR, although not a panacea, gives more power to the people to limit government than allowing a free-for-all by Alabama's lobbyists, legislators, and judges. Chairman Michael Probst, an opponent, said, "I'm very wary of populist control of government [and] direct democracy.... I... see a lot of potential for good if the people could veto legislation, but I fear much more the ability of people to initiate it...."

IRR is not an official plank of the Libertarian Party's platform.

ALABAMA LIBERTY is the newsletter of the Alabama Libertarian Party; P.O. Box 210939; Montgomery, AL 36121-0939. Articles and items of interest are welcome. Ad rates are available on request. Call (205) 265-1770 for information on joining the Alabama Libertarian Party or subscribing to Alabama Liberty.

INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

by John Martin

This past year, proposals for initiative, referendum and recall have circulated in several southern states to give citizens the means to bypass unresponsive state legislatures and initiate legislation on their own.

According to polls, initiative and referendum are popular with citizens and unpopular with politicians, especially if recall is included. This has been a hotly debated issue, and its fiercest opponents have been elected officials. Here in Alabama, an I&R bill was killed this last regular session.

Opponents claim that irresponsible I&R legislation can get out of control. Some cite the decline of the ancient Greeks as a failure of too much direct democracy. On the other hand, one would be hard pressed to outdo our present elected officials, where about 99% of their major legislation is unconstitutional.

Initiative is the part that some libertarians have reservations about. They fear that certain unconstitutional bills could be more easily passed. Virtually all libertarians support referendum to repeal existing laws and as a "third house" required to pass legislation.

Some opponents have argued that I&R would allow people to repeal most if not all taxes. States that have it have proved otherwise, although some major tax reductions, like Proposition 13, have been approved. On the other hand, many libertarians feel that popular tax opposition is too weak to even bring taxes down to Constitutional levels. And, unfortunately, there have been occasional tax increases approved via I&R.

Another argument against I&R is that too many initiatives might get on the ballot. This can happen if the signature requirements on petitions are too low. On a recent Liberty Forum, Mike Probst commented, "In California, I believe, in one election there were 80 some initiatives on the ballot. That would seem an overwhelming number of things for anybody to contemplate and be able to vote

intelligently on." His guest, I&R supporter Helen Kicker, said that Alabama's proposal would have a cap of ten per ballot. She said that signature requirements would be 6% of the people who voted in the last gubernatorial race statewide including at least 2% from each county "to keep large areas from dominating the petition process." Constitutional amendments would require 8% statewide.

Mike said he was concerned that, "Would it not... make it even easier for special interests to achieve their ends because now they can even circumvent the legislature? They don't even have to lobby.... They can create their own initiative, hire petitioners, get it on the ballot, and run a fancy ad campaign...."

Helen responded, "You can have campaign disclosure, a cap on initiative campaigns, and in Mississippi you cannot even use television, radio and newspaper advertisements."

Mike concluded, "I am a proponent of limited government. And I also mentioned that I'm very leery of populist government--direct democracy. But at the same time, our government has long since exceeded its proper Constitutional limits. We basically have a government that's out of control. So I'm tempering my earlier statements by saying that I might be willing to give this a try just to see how it works out since it's almost at a point where I'd say we've got nothing to lose."

In Alabama, the state constitution requires a referendum on all property tax increases. The legislature has passed numerous increases, but the vast majority were voted down by the people. That requirement has kept Alabama's property taxes the lowest in the nation. A statewide one mill fire tax and a 12 mill Montgomery County school tax were canned by angry voters this June. On the other hand, income, sales, gasoline, and business taxes are out of bounds because there are no referendum requirements; those taxes were invented after the 1901 constitution was written.

UNOPPOSED CANDIDATES

Guess how much of the Alabama legislature has NO opposition this November: more than half. The ALP urges ALL members to know their state house and senate districts and representatives. If yours is

unopposed, oppose him. These are the offices Libertarians need to run for. They are the most winnable.

To run for the house, a candidate must collect 116 valid signatures (with voting locations included) from his district. For the senate, he needs 347. There is still enough time to collect them. They are due in the Secretary of State's office at the end of August. You can run as either a Libertarian or an independent.

Unopposed senate districts are 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 30, and 33. Unopposed house districts are 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 31, 34, 37, 38, 39, 41, 44, 45, 47, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 63, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, 77, 78, 81, 82, 83, 84, 86, 89, 90, 94, 97, 98, 99, 100, 102, and 103.

Liberty Calendar

North Alabama Libertarians meet on the last Tuesday of every month at 6:00 pm in Huntsville. Call Alan Barksdale (205) 830-6601

Montgomery area Libertarians meet on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 at Shoney's on the Atlanta Highway in Montgomery. John Garrett, the program director, can be reached at (205) 285-6806.

The Northeast Libertarian Supper Club meets on the 4th Thursday of each month at Shoney's in Anniston on McClellan Blvd. at 6:30 pm. Call Woodrow Albea (205) 236-5719 for more information.

Auburn University Libertarians have monthly meetings in the Foy Union Bldg. Call Josh Pinkston for details.
(205) 821-6072

LIBERTY FORUM is now broadcast live once a month on TCI television (Montgomery channel 3) on the third Monday of the month at 8:30 pm. The program lasts one hour. Host Michael Probst made his live TV debut April 18th with Auburn philosophy professor, Tibor Machan. Videos of earlier radio programs had been broadcast on tape on TCI since February.

ALABAMA HAS 29,000 LIBERTARIANS

WHO ARE THEY ?

See the other side of this page for details.



The World's Smartest Political Quiz

Presented by the Alabama Libertarian Party

P.O. Box 210939

Montgomery, AL 36121

1 205 265-1770

1 800 207-1770 (New inquiries only please)

Tired of seeing your unique individual beliefs oversimplified as either left or right, liberal or conservative?

For the following statements circle: Y for agree, N for disagree, M for maybe or partially agree.

What are your beliefs on personal freedom? 20 10 0

1. Volunteer military service is effective and moral Y M N
(Free citizens must not be drafted)
2. Repeal laws authorizing government censorship Y M N
3. Repeal laws authorizing government prohibition of consensual acts by consenting adults Y M N
4. Repeal laws authorizing government prohibition of self endangerment Y M N
5. Repeal unreasonable restrictions on peaceful self-supporting foreign nationals immigrating to the U.S. . Y M N

My personal score: Add 20 for Y's, 10 for M's, 0 for N's

What are your beliefs on economic freedom?

1. Repeal subsidizing of farmers and quotas on agricultural production Y M N
2. Repeal penalties and restrictions on trade between private citizens in the U.S. and other countries Y M N
3. Repeal minimum wage and occupational licensing laws. (They create unemployment and drive up prices by destroying competition) Y M N
4. Work as rapidly as feasible to replace government welfare with private charity. (Americans have historically been the most charitable people in world history.) Y M N
5. Work rapidly to create a true free market for all drugs by decriminalizing consumption and marketing of recreational drugs and abolishing the FDA and repealing prescription drug laws. (Current laws encourage violence and corruption and drive up prices of all drugs.) Y M N

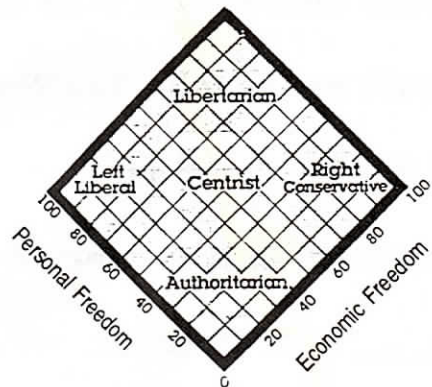
My economic score: Add 20 for Y's, 10 for M's, 0 for N's

Plot your position on other side

How to use the Freedom Compass

Mark your personal score on the left and your economic score on the right. Then follow the grid lines until they meet at your political identity.

The compass measures degree of dedication to the ideals of individual liberty (Liberty of necessity requires personal responsibility). Liberals in a comparative sense value personal freedom. Conservatives in a comparative sense value economic freedom. Libertarians value both to the highest degree possible. Authoritarians value both only slightly or not at all.



Examples:

- M. Thatcher (right) •
- F. D. Roosevelt (left) •
- Henry David Thoreau and Thomas Jefferson (top) •
- Stalin and Hitler (bottom)

The World's Smartest Political Quiz

Presented by The

Alabama Libertarian Party

Let's work together and find the 29,000 Libertarians in Alabama who voted for our U.S. Senate Candidate, Jerome Shockley, in the 1992 general election. These were not protest votes because this was a three way race. There are untold thousands out there just waiting to join the ALP. Many do not even know we exist. The World's Smartest Political Quiz is our custom designed marketing tool. Help swell The Party ranks without the hassle of arguing with the unconvinced. Let's find the ones who are ready to join us now.

Carry the quiz to all political meetings you attend and simply hand it out and smile. No arguing necessary. Cast a broad sweep and find those ready-made Libertarians. Good starting places are Ross Perot groups, NRA meetings, church meetings concerned about WACO, home schoolers, Toastmaster meetings, and flea markets. Leave one for your favorite waitress next time you eat out.

At five cents a quiz, one dollar allows easy contact with 20 potential members. We are not in a position to fund the distribution of this powerful tool from the ALP treasury at this time. As always, we must rely on the dedication and grass roots activity of each Libertarian throughout Alabama. We are not offering any discounts until we gain some experience with our costs.

Yes, rush my order for The World's Smartest Political Quiz today !!!

\$5.00 (Minimum order) gets you 100 Quizzes _____ Check here

Other orders, in increments of \$1.00

\$ _____ at 20 quizzes per dollar for _____ Quizzes _____ Check here

Name and address _____

Mail you check and this order form to ALP Headquarters, today !!!

BITS AND PIECES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING in Montgomery may soon be a thing of the past if City Councilman Joe Reed gets his way. He wants a "tougher ordinance" to control so-called "substandard" housing. Reed said he would make housing "reform" a top priority and said, "We're going to have the slumlords on the run." Reed also proposed a law restricting parking in yards. One wonders how many of Reed's constituents--who are mostly black and poor--are going to be forced out of their "substandard" homes into even more substandard public housing, under bridges, or into the streets. Maybe then they'll wake up and vote him out of office.

CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS need close scrutiny. Many churches advocate government policies that tend to violate individual rights--i.e. touting the "drug war," "anti-porn" crusades, and gun buybacks. A perfect (and horrible) example is the Southern Baptist Convention's endorsement of government health care. Its only opposition to Slick Willie's plan are the provisions for abortions and the distribution of contraceptives to minors; they approved everything else. These are but a few examples of churches circumventing God-given individual rights and attempting to ordain religious objectives by petitioning the government to use coercion.

The MERCEDES-BENZ scandal keeps growing and growing. On May 24, the State Industrial Development Authority (ADO director Billy Joe Camp, state Finance Director Jim White, and acting Revenue Commissioner George Minglehoff) approved similar "incentives" to eight more industries. Courtalds Fibers Inc. is building a \$200 million expansion for 120 jobs (\$1,666,667 per job), and Tuscaloosa Steel is building a \$175 million expansion for 190 jobs (\$921,053 per job). The total (by May 25), EXcluding Mercedes, is 1.3 billion (spelled with a B) to 26 industries for about 3423 jobs (\$379,784 per job). Poor old Mom and Pop won't qualify. They can't come up with a capital investment of at least \$2 million and provide at least 20 jobs.

On "For the Record" (APT July 5, 1994), Lloyd Dobyns (host of the late 1970's documentary "Weekend") was asked in an interview what he thought of Folsom's Mercedes deal. He said, "Oh, it was the

worst investment you could make."

SECOND AMENDMENT supporters had a field day on June 25th when Citizens for Safe Government and Gun Owners of America sponsored a rally on the Capitol steps. About 400 people attended, carrying signs, American flags, state flags, one Stars and Bars, and one battle flag. Speakers included Larry Pratt, Jon Griswold, Fob James, John Garrett, Mike Probst, and CSG representatives. The media attended, but objective reporting was lacking. WAKA ran a bit piece on Fob James with a few glimpses of the rally. WSFA broadcast nothing at all. The Advertiser (June 26, p 1-B) printed a tiny picture and (June 27, p 3-C) a small, hostile article (by Stephen Merelman) that said, "About 250 Confederate flag-waving, sign-toting demonstrators attended..." and that Randy Weaver was a "white separatist and firearm-charge fugitive."

The MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION railroaded a 12 mill property tax increase proposal onto its constituents April 18th. The chamber was packed with pro-statist education fanatics and only three opponents. Former County Commissioner H. B. "Mac" McKinney made the most rational comment, "We could let you have all the gold in Fort Knox, and you'd still want more." It fell on deaf ears. The commission voted 4-0 (one abstention) to raise the millage from 8 to 20. Fortunately, it required a referendum. Montgomeryians were relieved with its defeat on June 28 after the pro-taxers spent \$60,000 on advertising.

The tax brought local talk shows to the boiling point. The best comment was a FAX to Don Markwell from "Sir Aristotle:" "Don, why don't you look up the definition of socialism in your dictionary? Sounds a lot like the government-run school system, doesn't it? How long are you all going to debate how to fix socialism and make it work? The schools are wasteful, inefficient, and unaccountable because those are the inherent defects of socialism. How long will you all continue to argue about how to arrange yourselves around a house fire before urinating on it? The only solution is to completely withdraw support from the government-run schools altogether. I'm for an educated public. That's why I'm opposed to government-run public education." Don replied, "He gets right down to the nitty-gritty, doesn't he?"

ALABAMA LIBERTARIAN PARTY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

We hold that every person has a natural right to life, liberty, and justly acquired property; that liberty is essential to human happiness, progress, survival, and creativity; and that force may only be used in defense of life, liberty, and property. We hold that each individual has the responsibility and obligation to respect the rights of others, and to accept the consequences of his own actions.

We hold that no person or institution, public or private, has any right to initiate the use of force or fraud against others; and that no person should be forced to sacrifice his life, liberty, or property for the benefit of others.

We hold that the voluntary exchange of goods and services - the free market - is the only morally defensible arrangement of society; and that the free market will provide the greatest opportunity for prosperity and the pursuit of happiness.

We hold that, "THE SOLE OBJECT AND ONLY LEGITIMATE END OF GOVERNMENT IS TO PROTECT THE CITIZEN IN THE ENJOYMENT OF LIFE, LIBERTY, AND PROPERTY, AND WHEN GOVERNMENT ASSUMES OTHER FUNCTIONS, IT IS USURPATION AND OPPRESSION." (Alabama Constitution)

Name _____ Street or POB _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ County _____

Telephone (Home) _____ (Work) _____ Signature _____ Date _____

I wish to be a member of the Alabama Libertarian Party _____ I wish to subscribe only _____

Send a check or money order for \$10 to The Alabama Libertarian Party. The Address is below.

Occupation _____ Employer _____

Federal law requires that we ask this question.

Alabama Libertarian Party

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