

LIBERTY PLEDGE

NEWSLETTER

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America Isn't Getting More Liberal — It's Getting More Libertarian. Today the public is broadly more libertarian than it was just decades ago

By David Bier and Daniel Bier
Excerpted from *Anything Peaceful*
(Foundation for Econ. Education)
Published on July 2, 2015

This week the *New York Times*' "Room for Debate" columnists discussed the question "has America become more liberal?" Debater Molly Worthen, a professor at UNC Chapel Hill, is no libertarian, but even she sees what many others have been saying: America isn't getting more liberal or more conservative—it's getting more libertarian.

A wide range of Gallup polls agree. Take guns. In 1990, just 19 percent opposed "stricter laws covering the sale of firearms." In 1991, barely half opposed a law that would "ban the possession of handguns." In 2014, those numbers had risen to 52 percent and 73 percent, respectively.

On gay rights, Americans have also turned dramatically libertarian. In 1988, just a third of Americans thought gay and lesbian relations should be "legal." In 1996, only 27 percent thought gay marriage should be legal. In 2014, Americans favored legalizing both homosexuality and same-sex marriage by 69 percent and 60 percent, respectively.

Views on marijuana underwent a similarly quick turn. In 1995, just 25 percent of Americans favored legalizing marijuana. In 2014, it was [at] 51 percent.

On immigration, Americans are also much more open today. In 1996, only 38 percent opposed further restrictions on immigration; in the 1980s, just 41 percent favored legal-

ization of unauthorized immigrants. In 2013, those numbers were 63 percent and 69 percent, respectively.

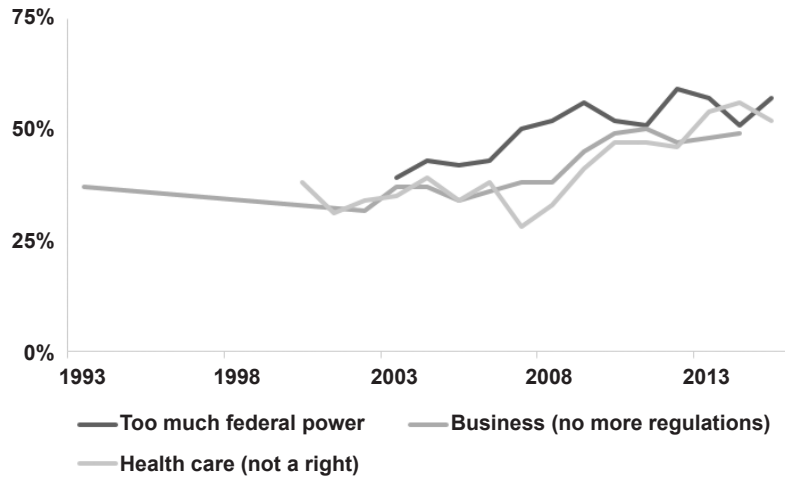
On economic issues, Americans are also growing skeptical of bigger government.

In 1993, 37 percent thought businesses should be regulated less; in 2014, a plurality, 49 percent, wanted fewer regulations. In 2000, just 38 percent said it was not the federal govern-

years to measure the public's "policy mood" (a measure of preference for more or less government). They found the public has become dramatically more economically conservative since the 1960s, and this shift happened in all fifty states and in every region of the country.

The public has also become more libertarian on foreign policy, the draft, and the environment.

Public Opinion on Economic Policy and Federal Power



ment's responsibility to ensure every American had health care; last year, 52 percent said health care was not the government's job.

This corresponds with an increase in the percentage of respondents indicating that the federal government has "too much power." In 2003, the first year the poll was taken, 39 percent agreed. In 2013, the number hit 60 percent.

This isn't a fluke. Political scientists Peter Ens and Julianna Koch pooled together hundreds of thousands of poll responses over the last fifty

Perhaps the most startling sign of how quickly the culture has changed is on interracial marriage, something that we absolutely take for granted today. But as late as 1994, only 48 percent of American thought it was "acceptable" for blacks to marry whites. Today, it's 87 percent.

Unfortunately, while the public at large is moving in a libertarian direction on many issues, the [old] political parties are still representing the preferred statism of their base, even if

In 2016, Let's Have Real Presidential Debates

Excerpted from *River Cities' Reader*

By Thomas L. Knapp

Published on June 30, 2015

Every four years, the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) puts on a series of campaign commercials disguised as presidential and vice-presidential debates.

The CPD is, in theory, a not-for-profit organization “established ... to ensure that debates, as ... part of every general election, provide the best possible information to viewers and listeners.”

But the CPD is really just a scam the Republican and Democratic parties use to funnel illegally large “in kind” campaign donations, in the form of tens of millions of dollars’ worth of free media exposure, exclusively to their own candidates.

A real nonpartisan, not-for-profit debate organization would use objective criteria for deciding which candidates may participate in debates. The CPD continuously refines its criteria with an eye toward ensuring that no third-party or independent [candidate] qualifies for a microphone at a CPD “debate.”

Billionaire independent/Reform Party candidate Ross Perot managed to jump through their hoops in 1992, afterward polling 19 percent in the general election. The CPD excluded him in 1996, cutting his vote percentage down to 8 percent. Since then, the CPD has successfully excluded additional candidates from their Democrat/Republican campaign infomercials.

Libertarians aren't fans of laws limiting the people's ability to give their money—as much of it as they want—to the candidates they support. But if there are going to be such rules, they should apply across the board.

That's why the Libertarian Party, the Green Party, both parties' 2012 presidential and [VP] candidates, and 2012 Justice Party presidential nominee Rocky Anderson are suing the CPD. The Our America Initiative, headed up by 2012 Libertarian Party presidential nominee Gary Johnson, is coordinating the legal challenge.

The relief the plaintiffs seek is simple: If the CPD is going to pretend to be a not-for-profit, nonpartisan debate organization, it should be required to start acting like one. Instead of giving the Republicans and Democrats a free series of campaign infomercials, the CPD must put on real debates, open to all candidates who are legally qualified...and whose names appear on enough state ballots for them to hypothetically win the election.

Would victory in this suit make a real difference for third-party and independent candidates? Absolutely. Exposure in the debates might or might not put Libertarians or Greens over the top, but it would at least expose the American public to the real panoply of choices instead of to one pre-selected pair.

New and renewing Liberty Pledgers

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Glenn Goodman	Dan L. Rycroft
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Joel Gregory	Nicholas J. Sarwark
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Kenneth Ikeda	Kevin N. Tucker
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Shane Jackson	Ryan N. Verling
Kerry Johnston	Gene L. Warren
Clinton D. Jones	Michael Wester
G. Jason Karluk	Michael Wilson
Nathan Kleffman	Eric M. Witcher
Scott A. Kohlhaas	Brandon Young

Libertarian Party Chair and WAU Grad Talks About Freedom

Excerpted from *Spectrum Magazine*
by Gary Chartier
Published on April 17, 2015

Nicholas Sarwark, chair of the Libertarian National Committee, graduated from Washington Adventist University in 1998 with a BS in computer science and a minor in philosophy, going on to earn a JD from American University's Washington College of Law, cum laude, in 2008.

Question: Why should anyone be interested in “America’s third-largest political party”?

Answer: Neither old party has a plan to get our government to stop spending our grandchildren into bankruptcy; they only have different arguments for what government programs the national debt should be used to pay for. Neither old party wants to let you make your own life choices.

The LP is the only political party fundamentally committed to human freedom. We believe that Americans should be treated like adults and allowed to make their own choices. There are two old parties committed to coming up with rules and laws to tell you how you can live your life; there’s only one party committed to empowering you to pursue your happiness however you see fit as long as you don’t hurt anyone.

Question: Should Seventh-day Adventists find the LP appealing? Why?

Answer: I know many Seventh-day Ad-

ventists who are active within the LP. [Founders of Seventh-day Adventism] were deeply skeptical of a government using policy to enforce Sunday laws for the benefit of the dominant Christian sects or to push unhealthy diets for the interests of big business. There is also a long history of principled pacifism and conscientious objection that dovetails nicely with the Libertarian Party’s foreign policy.

Question: Some Adventists would be uncomfortable with libertarianism as a political position because they think it implies support for libertinism.

Answer: There is a difference between allowing other adults to make libertine choices in their own lives and support for libertinism as a good. As a public defender, [I] met many whose lives were ravaged by drugs like methamphetamine. However, being locked in a cage didn’t improve their situation.

Adults need to be allowed [the] freedom to make bad choices in order to have the opportunity to make good choices. When I was at WAU, attendance at some worship services was mandatory. What people took away from those services varied greatly between those students who were there because they had to be and those there because they wanted to be. It’s the same with the choice to live a moral life of service. I have embraced the motto of my alma mater and the principles of the “Gateway to Service” — not because I am required to, but

because I chose to.

Question: Others would be doubtful... they believe Christianity means a commitment to social justice [that’s] inconsistent with the libertarian philosophy.

Answer: Nothing within libertarianism is incompatible with a commitment to social justice. Jesus called his followers to go out and live their witness, not to force others to do so.

The Adventist Church does wonderful work to help the underserved, funded through the voluntary tithe of the members. [But] forcing non-Adventists to tithe to the Adventist Church would be wrong. One can’t achieve justice through injustice.

Libertarians are convinced that, without government interference, productivity would be greater, and people who wanted to support charitable causes would have a lot more resources with which to do so.

Government actively creates poverty — through licensing requirements land-use regulations, building codes [etc.] that [raise] the cost of starting and growing businesses, and through the active theft of assets, mass incarceration.... Getting rid of poverty-producing interventions would play a massive role in reducing poverty.

Question: What’s it like being chair of America’s third largest political party?

Answer: Difficult and hopeful.... Remember, it was not Goliath and the multitudes who were victorious. It was David.

I would like to make a one-time donation to the LP:

- \$5,000
- \$1,000
- \$500
- \$250
- \$100
- \$50
- \$25
- _____ Other

I would like to increase my monthly pledge to this level:

- \$2,500**
- \$1,000**
- \$500**
- \$250**
- \$100**
- \$50**
- \$30**
- _____ **Other**
(minimum \$10)

(Please make checks payable to **Libertarian Party.**)

Please bill my Visa MasterCard AmEx Discover

Card number: _____ Exp: _____

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Occupation*: _____

Employer*: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work: _____ Cell: _____

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* Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year. Political contributions are not tax deductible.

An Open Letter To The NRA, From A Libertarian

Excerpted from *The Global Dispatch*
Published on July 4, 2015

I am writing you today out of concern for the National Rifle Association, of which I am a proud member. Recently I switched from the Republican Party to the Libertarian Party and I explain why [in my article at *LinkedIn.com*].

I have found the Libertarian Party to be even more staunchly in favor of smaller government and individual liberty than [are] the Republicans, particularly including the liberties provided by the Second Amendment. They are, in fact, the party of principle, which neither the modern-day Republicans [nor] Democrats can claim to be without provoking laughter.

However, I have noticed that the NRA does not seem to include Libertarian candidates in its

voter guides nor in its support or endorsements of political candidates. See, for example, [“Florida NRA Political Victory Fund Endorsements,” at *PollVault.com*].

It is certainly clear that people are leaving the two old parties because of their lack of core principles. Among the places they are more and more choosing to go is the Libertarian Party, which, by percentage, is quickly growing while the old parties are increasingly stagnant, particularly with respect to the younger generations.

If the NRA is truly to be an objective force in protecting the Second Amendment in the future, it needs to reconsider its lockstep march with the Republicans. I fear that so tight an association with one of the old parties will cause the NRA to look less than principled, and more a part of the old political machine whose only

purpose is to raise money and acquire power for its own sake.

To this end, I would like to recommend that the NRA investigate which candidate is actually a better supporter of the Second Amendment in the 2016 campaign cycle, including a review of any Libertarian candidate’s positions, before you make your voter guides, decide [whom] to support and ...endorse. I think that you may be surprised by what you find, and I hope to be proud of [the candidates] you endorse in 2016.

Thank you.

John D. Pierce, Esq.

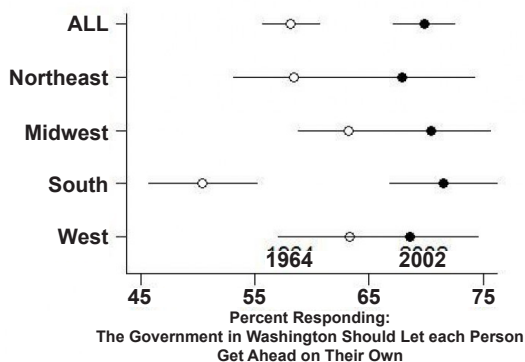
John “JD” Pierce is an attorney in Clearwater, Florida and a member of the Libertarian Party of Florida, serving on the Executive Committee as the representative for Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, and Hernando Counties.

America Getting More Libertarian

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its broader appeal is shrinking. Politicians are still catering to special interests in their constituencies, and long-established bureaucracies are still there and grinding away at our freedoms.

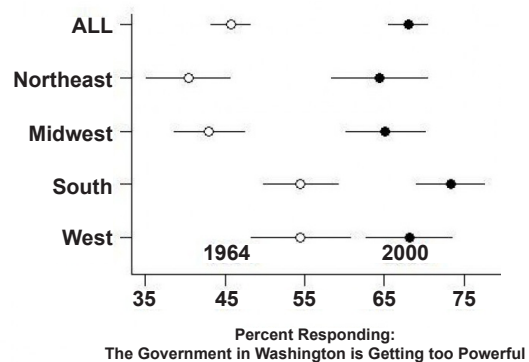
America today is light years ahead of where it was just



a couple decades ago — whether that will translate into concrete change remains to be seen. But on at least three issues (gay rights, marijuana legalization, and gun rights), we have already seen a sea change in policy.

David Bier is an immigration policy analyst at the Niskanen Center. He is an expert on visa reform, border security, and interior enforcement.

Daniel Bier is the editor of Anything Peaceful. He writes on issues relating to science, civil liberties, and economic freedom.



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