

LIBERTY PLEDGE

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newsletter

Heartland Libertarians Five for Nine in April Elections

Consolidated from various staff reports

Libertarian candidates are now five for nine in elections in Kansas and Missouri held on Tuesday, April 3, 2007. Show Me State Libertarians have cause to celebrate after Doug Burlison won a four year term on the Springfield City Council. Burlison defeated Conrad Griggs by 4,478 votes to 4,055 (52.5%) for the Seat C position on the nine member council. Springfield has over 151,000 residents, making it the third largest city in Missouri.

Former Mayor of Chillicothe, Jeff Foli, lost his bid to regain that position. Foli had won three elections before—twice for mayor. Early reports have him with 27% of the vote in a partisan contest.

Burlison credited his previous campaigns for US Congress and city council for building his name recognition in his district. When Burlison ran for council last time, he discovered so many unanswered questions about city operations that he led a successful petition drive to have the city audited by the State Auditor. Now that he has ridden that local activism to an election victory, he will have an opportunity to do something about the results of that audit on the council.

Besides Doug Burlison's election to the Springfield City Council, Missouri Libertarians Mike Ferguson and Joel Stoner also won local races. Ferguson now has a seat on the Jackson County Water Supply Board, while Stoner will serve as an Alderman in Macks Creek.

Next door in Kansas, Libertarians built upon their growth in 2006 by electing Mike Wilson to the United School District Board of Education in Salina and Larry Manes to the Allen County Community College Board of Trustees.

"Waging valiant yet losing efforts were Karl Peterjohn for the Board of Education in Wichita, Lorraine Fisher Koneczny for the Johnson County (KS) Community College Board, and Don Benski for Jennings (MO) City Council," explained a Libertarian Party of Kansas press release.

All of these races were nonpartisan.

Ferguson defeated his opponent Joel Kump with

73 percent of the vote. When asked why he won so handily, Ferguson said, "I've found it highly rewarding to get involved in local government and actually make a difference. Running a credible campaign that actually focused on relevant issues in 2004 led to my being appointed to Grandview's Transportation Committee in 2005. In 2006 I was elected Chair by the other members of the committee. They reelected me Chair earlier this year."

Repeating a common theme from recently elected Libertarians, Ferguson said, "The primary reason anyone runs for local office should be to make our communities a better place."

In the wake of winning three of their five races, Missouri Libertarian Party Chair Darla Maloney said, "credible candidates and real campaign efforts pay off." It is noteworthy that all of Missouri's candidates this year had strong local name recognition based on their records of community service and political activism before they even filed for office this year.

Wilson credited his victory to his experience in higher education and on local appointed boards. He came in fourth out of six candidates for four seats, with 2,687 votes (16.7 percent). A 23 year resident of Salina and retired from the local campus of Kansas State University, Wilson has served on the town's Board of Zoning Appeals and the Planning and Zoning Commission since 2003.

Wilson walked his neighborhood and placed about 40 yard signs throughout Salina. "I can be [the teachers'] advocate and present their concerns at board meetings," said Wilson. "Burdensome mandates such as the No Child Left Behind legislation should be opposed."

"Candidate recruitment has been identified as one of my highest priorities," said Stephen Gordon, who now serves as the Libertarian Party's new political director. "Expect to see even more candidates with strong records of community service in local races over the next couple of years. And with great candidates like these, we can certainly expect to see more wins, too."

Libertarians' silver lining

The third party may not have much electoral success, but its free-market ideals are becoming popular.

by Brian Doherty

Libertarianism may seem hopelessly marginalized in American politics. The national record of the Libertarian Party since 1972 — the first year it fielded candidates — isn't too bright. Ed Clark, the party's presidential candidate in 1980, received 921,000 votes, the highest ever, but Michael Badnarik, the 2004 nominee, garnered merely 397,000.

Americans continue to be suspicious of radical third-party alternatives — if they are lucky enough to be aware of them — thanks largely to media that foster a feedback loop of "they can't win, so why cover them?" However, including about 600 candidates on every level — local, state and federal — the Libertarian Party attracted more than 13 million votes in 2006.

But counting votes for third parties isn't the best way to judge the growth and prospects of libertarianism in the United States. Libertarian ideas should never be counted out in this country because they are at the heart of its founding.

The central insight of libertarianism is in the Declaration of Independence. We have the right to life, liberty and the ability to pursue happiness (though no guarantee of achieving it). Government's only purpose is to help protect those rights — and if it fails, we have the right to alter or abolish it.

But from the declaration on, in some libertarians' telling, it has been downhill for liberty in this country. Certainly libertarian sensibilities were offended by the expansion of government's ability to tax, manage and regulate the economy and our private lives in the 20th century, and by the projection of U.S. military might overseas for reasons other than direct defense of the American people.

In the immediate aftermath of the New Deal, the modern American libertarian movement first began to coalesce in the works of such feisty American female novelists and philosophers as Isabel Paterson, Rose Wilder Lane and Ayn Rand, and in the insights of Austrian economists Ludwig von Mises and F.A. Hayek.

But the libertarian movement began as a reaction to how alien the ideas of unbridled individual and market liberty had become. When former Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce chief Leonard Read launched the first libertarian think tank, the Foundation for Economic Education, in 1946, his ideas about limited government and free markets were so marginal in the United States as to seem almost seditious.

Lane was investigated by the FBI in the early post-war years for daring to write on a postcard that Social Security was the sort of socialistic government management of people's lives we fought wars against. True Social Security, she insisted, was canned vegetables and slaughtered pigs in your cellar. She and Paterson refused

to accept anything from the Social Security system. In 1950, the Buchanan Committee, a House panel investigating lobbying efforts, found Read and his foundation positively un-American because they opposed price controls, public housing, the draft and loyalty oaths. The committee subpoenaed records, called Read to testify and ordered some of his supporters to report on which organizations they backed. One foundation funder, Southern California Edison Vice President William Mullendore, denied Congress' right to make such a "harassing and burdensome inquiry" into his attempts to influence his government. Mullendore got away with his defiance — but today's campaign finance laws allow such governmental intrusion.

When, in 1964, Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater used libertarian ideas to decry the excessive growth of government, he was defeated by what was at the time the largest margin of votes in U.S. history. He also was condemned as "psychologically unfit" by more than 1,000 psychiatrists (who never met him) for his belief that the managerial-welfare state in the United States had strayed too far from the country's roots.

Libertarian ideas had a tumultuous period of expansion in the years after Goldwater. Rand became a campus favorite, selling novels of uncompromising libertarianism to tens of millions. A Harvard philosophy professor, Robert Nozick, won a National Book Award for his 1974 book, "Anarchy, State and Utopia," which rigorously maintained that if we have rights, then most of the functions of the modern state, including redistributing wealth and outlawing certain drugs, are philosophically illegitimate.

Also in 1974, Hayek won the Nobel Prize for economics. Hayek is best known for his 1944 book, "The Road to Serfdom," which demonstrated to those who believed in a benign socialism that government economic control tends inexorably toward political tyranny. Two years later, Milton Friedman, a man as well known for his libertarian polemics as for his economic contributions, also won the Nobel Prize for economics. Libertarian ideas were moving toward the mainstream.

And then Ronald Reagan, who declared that "the very heart and soul of conservatism is libertarianism," won the presidency. Libertarians never believed that Reagan fully lived up to his small-government promise. But his libertarian ideas were a key part of the GOP's electoral appeal.

Over the decades, both major parties have successfully run on libertarian fumes: see Reagan's talk of tax cutting and entitlement reform; control over inflation since the 1980s, largely thanks to Friedman's monetarist ideas (Friedman also persuaded President Nixon to end

Libertarians' silver lining

continued

the draft in 1973), and President Clinton's overhaul of the federal welfare system, which echoed the beliefs and data in libertarian Charles Murray's 1984 book, "Losing Ground." One of the biggest policy debates of the Bush presidency has been about privatizing Social Security, an idea in the works at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, since the 1980s. Introducing market incentives and competition into government services — ideas that originated at the Reason Foundation in Los Angeles — are increasingly popular with local and state governments looking to cut costs and improve services.

A full libertarian victory is certainly unlikely, as a cursory survey of the leading presidential candidates going into 2008 shows. But libertarians can take heart in Americans' growing dissatisfaction with military intervention overseas, with the prospect of an entitlement state in which recipients far outnumber taxpayers and

with government manipulations and intrusions in education, immigration, abortion and stem cell research. In such a political context, libertarian wisdom about keeping government out of our lives as much as possible looks more and more promising.

Brian Doherty is the author of "Radicals for Capitalism: A Freewheeling History of the Modern American Libertarian Movement." as well as a senior editor at Reason magazine. This article originally appeared in the Los Angeles Times and was published at www.Reason.com; it has been reprinted with the permission of the author.

The Value of Paper Clips

When fundraising, it is comparatively easy to persuade people to contribute to political campaigns, television commercials or some exciting new project. It isn't always so easy to generate much-needed revenue for legal pads and paper clips, however.

What we're referring to are the day-to-day operations of the Libertarian Party which would not be adequately funded without you, our Liberty Pledgers.

Without you, we'd likely have no telephone lines, Internet site, photocopier, fax machine, paid staff members, office supplies, or any of the other things an office requires to run efficiently.

Thanks for your monthly efforts to keep the operations running smoothly at the Libertarian Party.

Helpful Online Resources

Most people know they can call the national office at 800-ELECT-US or visit us at <http://www.lp.org/>. But did you know you can:

Find the leading Libertarian Party candidates for 2007 at <http://www.lp.org/candidates/>.

Obtain daily updates about current events from a Libertarian perspective at <http://www.lp.org/yourturn/>.

Purchase the latest in Libertarian Party clothing, accessories and campaign supplies at <http://www.lpstuff.com>.

Visit a one-stop website filled with Libertarian Party history, facts and trivia at <http://www.lpedia.org/>.

BREAKING NEWS:

Libertarian David Kelley Wins Local Race in Illinois

This story just broke as the Liberty Pledge newsletter was being sent to the printer.

According to local sources, on Tuesday, April 17, Libertarian Party candidate David Kelley won reelection to Seat G of the Rockford, Illinois Board of Education.

Kelley has served as the Operations Committee Chairman and been outspoken against the school board running a financial deficit. Kelley's campaign was endorsed by Rockford Mayor Larry Morrissey at a press conference on April 9.

David Kelley was featured in the number one position on Candidate Tracker at the Libertarian Party website. He is a married 57 year old life-long resident of Rockford. After serving in the U.S. Army, he earned a degree in Building Construction Technology. He currently works as a project manager and estimator for an architectural and design firm.

He has been in the Libertarian Party since 1980 and serves as the legislative coordinator of the Kishwaukee Valley Chapter of ABATE and Campaigns Chair for the Libertarian Party of Illinois.

Kelley is a member of the CMC Neighborhood Association and is a soloist at Unity of Rockford.

This race marks the sixth out of ten April local elections in the Midwest where Libertarians have won.

Newsmakers

"If I could get this down to zero, I'd be happy." - Montana LP Chairman Mike Fellows about a proposed state income tax cut, *Billings Gazette*, April 11, 2007

"...the Libertarian Party, among all of the parties out there, is the only one that is true to my core philosophy of working to minimize government power and maximize individual liberty. None of the other parties, and especially the Republican Party any longer, is at all committed to that philosophy. And secondly, my great concern, manifested especially since 9/11, is the assaults on our fundamental civil liberties by this administration. [That's] personified, for example, in the disregard for the rule of law as exhibited by the warrantless NSA [National Security Agency] electronic surveillance in violation of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. More recently, [there were] documented abuses at the FBI in carrying out certain of the expanded powers granted in the Patriot Act, namely, national security letters. And in January of this year, the testimony by the attorney general that this administration does not believe that the fundamental right to a writ of habeas corpus is an important, fundamental, constitutional guarantee. So what we have is a party, the Republican Party, to which I was very proud to belong for many, many years, no longer being committed to a core conservative philosophy. The Libertarian Party is so committed, and I felt that at the time that it was necessary to make a change because of the seriousness of the assaults on our civil liberties." - former Congressman Bob Barr, *Salon News*, April 4, 2007

"For instance, most election bills are written in ways that help protect the power of the incumbency, ballot access laws being the most obvious example. They write laws that make it harder for them to have any third-party opposition. And [this recent call for public campaign financing] is yet another example; this is basically another ballot-access barrier." - LP Political

Director Stephen Gordon, *The New Standard*, April 2, 2007

The problem is that we are a minority party in a winner-take-all voting system," said Mr. Redpath, urging party activists to support "electoral reform" aimed at creating a system of proportional representation. - LNC Chairman William Redpath, *The Washington Times*, March 19, 2007

"We have to put our best faces forward in winnable races," said Shane Cory, who became executive director of the Libertarian Party last year. He emphasized the need to "build from the bottom up" by winning office at the state and local level, and agreed with Mr. Viguerie's stress on issue-oriented activism. "We need to diversify and be able to address a broad range of issues," Mr. Cory said. - LP Executive Director Shane Cory, *The Washington Times*, March 19, 2007

Welcome to the Liberty Pledge Club!

Mark Cenci
Alicia Clark
James Downen
Scott Fisher
Mark Gibb
Ben Lake
Michael Linden
J. May
Stephen McCarthy
Bill Niemczyk
Arjen Peirce
H. Rohs
Brad Sponholz
Deborah Sviridova

Thank you for your generous support!