

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

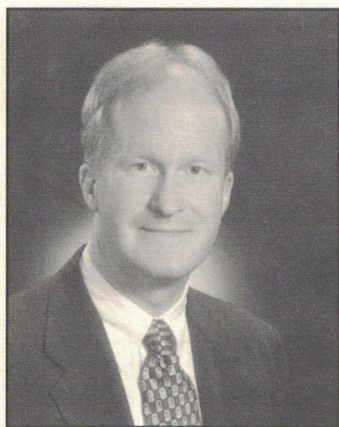
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Libertarian leaders should donate both 'treasure and time' Mark Rutherford stresses the importance of giving in non-election years

"I became a Libertarian despite the Libertarian Party," said Mark Rutherford, a lawyer in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Rutherford knew some Libertarians in the 1980s, but considered them to be "irresponsible potheads who I didn't trust to run my fraternity house, let alone government."



Mark Rutherford

Rutherford currently serves on the Libertarian National Committee as an At-Large Representative and is chair of the Indiana LP. However, Rutherford does not see his previous disdain for the LP's image and his current commitment as contradictory. In fact, Rutherford uses his former impressions of Libertarians as inspiration for his current leadership, a reminder to remain focused on the mission to elect Libertarians to office.

How was Rutherford transformed from someone skeptical of the LP's chances for success into a longtime party leader?

"I decided the LP had some hope in 1996 when the Indianapolis-area Libertarians began to become organized and political," he said. He joined that year, in part due to Harry Browne's presidential campaign and the campaigns of notable Indiana Libertarians.

Rutherford's previous experience with various nonprofits had taught him the value of a consistent giving program, and in 1997 he joined the Liberty Pledge program.

"It's easy to raise money when campaigns are in full tilt," he noted. "It's hard to raise money when it's a non-election year in the middle of winter, but the electric bill still has to be paid. Pledge revenue allows the LP to plan ensuring it can keep its doors open."

Because Rutherford believes in philanthropy as a function of the free market, he continued his pledges after becoming a Life Member in 2000. Aside from the "immense personal satisfaction" that he receives from giving, donations also "tell the marketplace who is doing a good job and who deserves attention," he said.

Rutherford became the Indiana state chair in 2000 and was elected to the LNC in 2001. However, he does not see his time commitments to the party as a substitute for monetary support; he maintains that both "treasure and time" are essential elements in taking ownership of an organization. "If you don't give what you can give financially, then you're not really taking ownership of the organization."

As state chair, Rutherford is proud of the progress that Indiana has made under his tenure. Included among those accomplishments are the Small Business Initiative, improving the quality and

quantity of candidates, institutionalizing paid office staff in the state, and organizing strong county affiliates.

Rutherford attributes his success as state chair to the foundation laid by his predecessors and considers his repeated re-election to his post as a sign that progress is being made in Indiana.

On the LNC, Rutherford has been and continues to be a champion of the "small corporate model" for the LP, focusing on professionalizing the national office and using every individual in a role that fits their unique abilities. Rutherford said, "The LP is still not there yet, but we are getting there."

Rutherford is also a strong proponent of branding and marketing for the LP. He considers it to be one of the most important tasks for the party to accomplish in a positive fashion.

"For 30 years, the LP has let others brand it in the way my friends in 1980 presented it to me, much to its detriment," he said. "If a more responsible group had first introduced the LP to me back then, I might not have taken 16 years to finally join!"

Part of this branding project will be to use our more mainstream party planks to attract more voters and members. Rutherford noted that this is Ron Paul's strategy for shifting his constituency to be more libertarian.

"He didn't do it by advocating his more 'radical' views first," Rutherford said. "He did it over several congressional sessions, and by gaining trust," not an overnight change.

This type of image overhaul requires longevity -- hence Rutherford's focus on donating to keep the party robust and alive even when it is not an exciting election season. He concluded, "Is the political fight for freedom worth the sacrifice of a good dinner at Olive Garden once a month? If so, make the baloney sandwich and go out one less time each month."

It's time to close the pledge gap!

Did you know that only 66 percent of pledges actually come in each month? That's over \$4,000 of bill-by-mail pledge dollars alone each month that simply don't arrive! Let's work together to close this gap.

Please make sure those mail notices are making their way back to us here at Headquarters, or consider an easier method — switching to a credit card pledge. These pledges help us keep costs down because they are cheaper and faster to process.

This time-saving method is already the most popular way to pledge by far. (1,600 pledgers out of 2,100 do it!)

Call Jessica Neno Wilson at (202) 333-0008 ext 235 or send an email to pledge@lp.org to switch to a credit card pledge today!

Rolling 2010 census keeps data up to date

By Haya El Nasser

If a lengthy questionnaire from the Census Bureau lands in your mailbox soon, it's no mistake.

The government will count all Americans in 2010, but it's not waiting until then to collect information on topics from household income and commuting to outhouses and ancestry — nuggets that communities and marketers rely on to place schools, roads, stores, hospitals and restaurants.

The new American Community Survey just began going to 250,000 households across the country every month. This rolling survey will give large cities a detailed demographic picture of their populations every year rather than every 10 years. Eventually, smaller communities will have similar data.

"We're in love with it as a concept," says David Taylor, a planning administrator in Tucson, a booming area where the survey has been tested since 1999. "To a community like ours that grows so rapidly, it's analogous to taking your baby to a pediatrician for a 'well check.' We get to take our temperature once a year instead of once a decade."

The Constitution requires an official census every 10 years. Those numbers are used to draw political districts and allocate federal funding. The tally is done through a "short form" sent to every household that asks basic questions such as the number of occupants and their age, gender and race.

The Census Bureau used to send a "long form" every 10 years to 1 in 6 households — about 20 million in 2000. The long form for the official Census is dead now, but the same questions are asked in the new monthly survey. Every year, about 3 million households — about 1 in 40 — will get the 67-question survey.

It will go to a sample of households in each of the nation's 3,142 counties. Starting next year, annual data will be released on smaller places of 65,000 or more people and, by 2008, on communities of 20,000 or more. By 2010, the data will be available for individual neighborhoods.

Not everyone is pleased. The Census meets resistance every decade from people who don't trust the government. That increased in 2000, when concerns over privacy heightened because of advances in technology. Charges of invasion of privacy came from some members of Congress and talk-radio shows. Many questions had been asked for decades and all were reviewed by Congress in 1998.

The **Libertarian Party** urged people to ignore most of the questions in 2000. It will do so again through postings on its Web site and e-mails to members, says George Getz, the party's communications director.

"We are going to tell people to answer one question and one question only: How many people live in your home," Getz says. That's all "busybody bureaucrats" need to know.

The Census Bureau hopes a monthly survey that goes to fewer people and lacks the national fanfare of the decennial count will mute some of the criticism.

(Left) *USA Today*, McLean, Virginia — January 17, 2005

(Below) *Rocky Mount Telegram*, Rocky Mount, North Carolina — February 10, 2005 (Opinion piece)

Is God a Libertarian?

By Ray Watters

I saw a bumper sticker I actually liked this week. It said, "God is not a Republican or a Democrat."

Of course, this was no real surprise to me. I've always thought God was more of a **Libertarian**.

I know, I know. Right now, everyone thinks God wears an American flag like a cape while he rides around on his elephant, crushing those who disagree with him.

I don't really remember any of that from Sunday school or college, so I don't think it's right. And while Jesus did ride a donkey into Jerusalem, I don't think that makes him a Democrat, either.

However, a number of polls assure me the 2004 election shows that morals and ballots go together like peanut butter and jelly. I'm not sure if that means they form a tasty treat or if the combination is something meant for children. Polls never answer the important questions.

Once you get rid of the big two, that just leaves the 38 or so active "third parties" here in the United States. Not surprisingly, a fair number of them claim to have the almighty in their corner, even if they don't have an autographed set of stone tablets.

Take a look at the American Heritage Party, a conservative Christian splinter cell that broke away from the Constitutional Party because the Constitutional Party didn't pray enough.

You can vote for whom you want. But think about the Libertarians. Their main planks are individual liberty and personal responsibility.

Those are some of the same things I hear Republicans say while they actually give more and more power to the federal government for things like education and homeland security.

The Libertarians also push nonintervention. Since God seems to be letting us fumble around here without smiting those who really need it, I'd say those views match up with his.

Of course, free will doesn't make that good of a stump speech. But that's not what extremists who mix religion and power want.

So, until the majority of this country stops thinking that no one knows the word of God and the teachings of a poor Jewish carpenter better than the millionaire white men in the U.S. Congress, consider me unaffiliated.

Distaste for taxes feeds state reliance on fees

By James Mayer

SALEM -- Oregon legislators say they won't raise your taxes to balance the next budget. But they might make it more expensive for you to attend college, dredge a stream or get a teaching license.

Their blueprint is the governor's budget, which would increase a range of fees and other charges to help support programs. That continues Oregon's rapid climb in the past decade from 23rd to seventh in the nation in state and local government fees paid -- an average of more than \$1,000 a year by every person.

The rise in revenue from fees -- paid by people who use a particular service -- has eased the pressure on the general fund, which comes primarily from taxes -- levied on the general population for services that benefit everyone.

Oregon's shift to supporting state government with fees has been dramatic.

In 1992, taxes accounted for 45 percent of total state revenue and fees brought in 10 percent. Ten years later, taxes had dropped to 36 percent and fees had grown to 13 percent, the most recent Census data show.

The trend may be unmistakable, but the policy has been largely unconscious. "We've never taken a look at the policy implications of that change," said Paul Warner, legislative revenue officer.

"Fees have become such a huge portion of the budget, we've got to be crystal clear about the choices we make for the state," said Sen. Ryan Deckert, D-Beaverton, the committee chairman.

Deckert wants to do more than discuss fees in his committee. He'd like to buck the political tide and push the line back toward a government financed more by taxes and less by fees.

"Every day, Oregon is becoming more of a user-pay society," he said. "I think Oregonians ultimately want a straightforward finance structure where you do it once, pay the tax, and government leaves you alone for 364 days."

Deckert said the shift has led to a largely unnoticed victory by champions of user fees. "We've become a Libertarian utopia," he said.

"If only it were true," sighed Richard Burke, executive director of the **Libertarian Party** of Oregon.

Libertarians haven't quite achieved a free-market paradise, Burke said, but their views on fees and taxes have gained ground.

"We have always supported user fees to finance things that need to be financed," he said, adding that fees should match a service's cost and not generate extra revenue.

Burke is a commissioner of the Tualatin Valley Water District, which adopted a charge-for-service model. "We will be completely off property taxes by December 2005," he said.

As fees mount, opposition could grow as residents resent paying for a service that benefits everyone. And Oregon's sluggish economic recovery means fees take a bigger bite

from the pockets of people who need or want certain services. That may be taking place already in higher education as students shop for bargains out of state.

The Legislature is seeing some resistance this session. A House committee last week approved a bill that would split the costs of firefighting insurance equally between taxpayers and private landowners, including timber companies and rural homeowners. Currently, landowners pay 60 percent.

But despite misgivings, it seems unlikely that the political atmosphere will favor a move back to reliance on taxes soon. If anything, the search for someone other than taxpayers to foot the bill continues.

Political opposition to taxes will continue to make fees attractive -- and raise issues such as finding a balance so citizens aren't priced out of government services.

(Left) *The Oregonian*, Portland, Oregon – January 30, 2005

(Below) *San Diego Union Tribune*, San Diego, California – January 19, 2005

Supreme Court wrangles with election case

By Gina Holland, Associated Press

WASHINGTON – The Supreme Court debated Wednesday whether voters from one political party should be allowed to cross over and vote in another party's primary, a practice forbidden in nearly half the states.

Justices are reviewing a First Amendment challenge to Oklahoma's system by the **Libertarian Party**, which wants to open its primaries to voters registered as Democrats or Republicans in hopes of attracting more members.

James Linger, the lawyer for the Libertarian Party, said its goal is to reach out to Libertarian-leaning Democrats and Republicans, and people who would otherwise not vote.

"This would actually benefit the major parties," Linger said, by revealing which members are least loyal.

Several justices seemed concerned that Oklahoma does not give voters a chance to participate in third-party elections. Voters are permitted to switch their registration to the Libertarian Party, but that must be done about eight weeks before the election and it might not be known then if the party had qualified to get a candidate on the general election ballot.

The case is *Clingman v. Beaver*, 04-37.

Justices ask: primaries state or party business?

By Linda Greenhouse

A Supreme Court argument on Wednesday posed a civics question with practical implications: Is a political party's primary basically the business of the party or the state?

Oklahoma was appealing a federal court decision that would have allowed political parties to open their nominating process to nonmembers.

Along with 23 other states, Oklahoma does not permit voters registered in one party to vote in another party's primary. Independent voters in Oklahoma may choose a party primary in which to vote, but those enrolled in a party may not cross party lines unless they "disaffiliate" from their party eight weeks before the election.

The federal appeals court in Denver, ruling last year on a challenge brought by Oklahoma's tiny **Libertarian Party**, held that the restriction violated the party's freedom of association under the First Amendment.

With only a few hundred members, the Oklahoma Libertarian Party wanted to broaden its appeal by opening its nominating process to members of other parties. But that strategy threatened to destabilize the political system, Oklahoma's assistant attorney general, Wellon B. Poe Jr., told the justices on Wednesday. "The state has an interest in a stable political system, which may be a two-party system," Mr. Poe said.

Oklahoma's argument, supported by eight other states as friends of the court, received a generally skeptical response. "So the state's interest here is in protecting the major parties from losing their members?" Justice Anthony M. Kennedy asked Mr. Poe.

Such an argument was "contrary to the thrust of our jurisprudence," Justice Kennedy added.

The Oklahoma case, *Clingman v. Beaver*, No. 04-37, presents the other side of that coin, said the Libertarian Party's lawyer, James C. Linger, who argued that a party should have the right to include others as well as exclude them.

"The integrity of a political party should be defined by a party and not by the state," Mr. Linger told the justices.

In Oklahoma's appeal, the state is arguing that its restriction is necessary to prevent parties from raiding one another's membership. Mr. Linger said the state's concern was misplaced.

"We should not be worrying about protecting major parties from the competition for ideas," he said.

Justice Scalia, however, appeared to find merit in the state's position. The reason for having party designations in the first place, he observed, was to give voters an idea of what the candidates stand for.

"If it's running as a party, it should run candidates who share those views," he said. "That seems to me to make a lot of sense."

The major parties in Oklahoma did not become involved in the challenge to the state's primary law. They neither participated in the lawsuit nor filed briefs at the Supreme Court stage.

Why should the state protect the parties' interests, if the parties were not motivated to speak for themselves, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg asked Mr. Poe, the state's lawyer?

"The state has to protect its interest whether the parties are involved or not," he replied.

Justice Scalia then provided another explanation.

"I suppose if I were the Democratic or Republican Party chairman, I wouldn't want to alienate my members by depriving them of the freedom of voting in the Libertarian primary," he said. "It makes you look parsimonious. They are, after all, politicians, aren't they?"

N.H. police chiefs endorse seat-belt law

By Clare Kittredge

The "Live Free or Die" state may finally be poised to buckle up.

A broad coalition of public safety and health care agencies in New Hampshire is mounting a campaign to pass a law this year requiring adults to wear their seat belts. The campaign includes the first-time endorsement of a seat-belt law from the New Hampshire Association of Chiefs of Police.

New Hampshire is the only state in the nation without a seat-belt law for adults, according to Elaine Frank, program director for the Injury Prevention Center at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. The state requires drivers and passengers under 18 to wear a seat belt.

Opposing the measure is the New Hampshire **Libertarian Party**.

"It's another example of our Fourth Amendment rights being breached," said John Babiarz, party chairman, referring to the right to freedom from unreasonable search and seizure.

"We believe people must be responsible for their actions. The responsible thing is to wear seat belts. But we feel this law is just another way of enforcing the nanny state upon us."

In 2004, 127 people were killed in vehicles on New Hampshire roads, up from 107 the year before, according to Earl Sweeney, New Hampshire assistant safety commissioner. He said at least three attempts to pass adult seat-belt bills have failed in his 30 years in state government.

(Above) *The New York Times*, New York, New York — January 20, 2005

(Right) *Boston Globe*, Boston, Massachusetts — January 27, 2005