

LIBERTY PLEDGE

Libertarian National Committee, Inc. ♦ 2600 Virginia Ave, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20037 ♦ Phone: (202) 333-0008 ♦ Fax: (202) 333-0072

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newsletter

Interview With Erik Viker, Libertarian Councilman



Following the November 6, 2007 elections, the Libertarian Party can boast a success rate of almost one in five for our candidates. One newly elected Libertarian is Erik Viker, who successfully ran for Selinsgrove Borough Council in Pennsylvania.

Erik shared his experience, as well as advice for potential

candidates, with *Liberty Pledge News* in a recent interview.

Liberty Pledge News (LPN): Why did you run for office as a Libertarian?

Erik Viker: I ran for office because I have an interest in giving back to a community that has been good to me. I also wanted to remind my fellow citizens that there is an alternative to the increasingly-disappointing two-party "system." We forget sometimes, because they've been around so long, that the Democratic and Republican parties have no official standing in the organization of our government. They are simply political clubs which have been allowed to grab the reins of our government because we've allowed it to happen over the past few decades. Philosophically, I feel it is important to vote and participate in government if you're part of a "minor" political party, rather than simply stay home in disgust. Libertarian party votes remind those business-as-usual politicians currently in power that we DO vote, but not necessarily for them.

LPN: What did you do to get elected? What helped

you the most?

Erik Viker: To get elected, I talked with citizens in the community since before the primary elections last season to get people interested in my ideas and my character. The local newspaper did an excellent feature story about the unusual experience of a Libertarian candidate running in this very Republican community, which helped people learn about what an LP member might stand for in public office. I also worked to promote name recognition through public appearances and placing many yard signs and "Viker for Borough Council" signs in public places.

Most importantly, having several well-respected prominent citizens willing to publicly support my candidacy certainly helped me at the polls. In municipal politics, the person often matters more than the party, and those who know me will appreciate my perspective regardless of political affiliation.

LPN: What are your plans as a member of the Selinsgrove City Council?

Erik Viker: I plan to apply basic Libertarian approaches to anything brought to the table, and won't support having the local government do what people can work out on their own. Government action should first protect the people from violence, fraud or coercion. Anything else is suspect and should be very carefully examined before assuming the government has to be involved.

Erik's campaign techniques provide a great model for a local Libertarian campaign. Local politics often has the most immediate influence on voters' lives, so Libertarian office-holders have a great opportunity to demonstrate how beneficial the Libertarian philosophy can be to communities.

Congratulations, Erik!

Atlas! PAC

Electing Libertarians to Public Office

For the Libertarian Party, the 2007 elections were better than expected. Despite a smaller number of candidates running than in previous years, the percentage of candidates elected and the positions elected were some of the best in many years. But despite the success, the Libertarian Party wishes to build on these results and have an even bigger year in 2008.

Leading the way is the Atlas! PAC, chaired by former Libertarian National Committee (LNC) board member Mark Rutherford. Atlas! PAC is a Libertarian organization dedicated to getting Libertarians elected by training candidates and volunteers to run effective campaigns outside of the LNC. In order to get candidates elected, Atlas! PAC focuses on FEC compliance, voter registration, lobbying and other real-world electioneering skills.

"We don't have to worry about issues like the National Convention, or worry about staffing," Rutherford says. "It gives us the freedom to focus on electing Libertarians." Because Atlas! PAC doesn't have the many essential duties required in running a national political party, like the LNC does, Rutherford feels Atlas! PAC can expend all its energy on training volunteers and candidates. Rutherford believes this translates into more effective campaigns and more Libertarians elected to office.

Rutherford thinks that the Libertarian Party has done an excellent job of identifying candidates; it's just that the lack of training and money has been holding these candidates back. "From my experience, we've won against Republicans and Democrats when funding has been comparable." Rutherford stated. "We haven't done a good job with getting candidates the resources and training they need to get them elected."

Atlas! PAC seeks to overcome this shortcoming.

"I grew up in politics," says Rutherford. "So I know some thing about what it takes to get elected." Rutherford's father, John, worked as a press director for a U.S. House campaign, and Mark, at the age of eight, often helped by putting stamps on direct mail pieces. He has worked with various campaigns ever since.

Rutherford feels that having trained candidates

will enable them to compete better with Republicans and Democrats. From FEC filings to the most efficient use of campaign funds, training and experience will vastly increase the number of Libertarians getting elected.

His suggestion to people looking to run? Get rid of the tight budget and raise money. "A tight budget is just an excuse for not wanting to raise money," says Rutherford. "You can't drive a car without gasoline, and you can't run a campaign without funding."

Atlas! PAC also utilizes seminars like those sponsored by *Campaigns & Elections* magazine, a resource for election and campaign material. Next year's seminar called "The Art of Campaigning" will have some of the best political consultants, campaign managers and politicians from around the country to talk about real-world issues in modern campaigns. Atlas! PAC is planning on sponsoring 10 Libertarians from around the country to attend the conference which is to be held June 12 - 14.

The future looks bright for Atlas! PAC as they continue to grow and enable Libertarians to get elected. Rutherford eventually hopes to focus on a business initiative targeting small businesses, which Rutherford calls the "natural constituency" of the Party. He feels this is a rich resource for potential candidates and campaign resources that will inevitably help in Libertarian campaigns.

For more information on Atlas! PAC, check out their Web site at: www.atlas-pac.com.

Libertarian Party 2007 Election Results:

19%

percentage won

of all known races in the United States

Fellow Libertarian: Glenn Jacobs

Libertarians come in all shapes, sizes, colors and classes, but we are united by our love of individual freedom. The Libertarian Party is very proud to have Glenn Jacobs, WWE Superstar, as a member of our liberty-loving community.

Glenn Jacobs was born in Spain while his father was in the Air Force. He grew up in Missouri, near the home of Mark Twain. Glenn graduated as an English major from Truman State University, where he was a basketball star. Glenn then became a wrestler. He has worked with the WWE for 12 years and is known in that respect as "Kane." Glenn lives with his wife, Natasha, and their many rescued animals in eastern Tennessee. Glenn is an avid reader, with great interest in politics and Austrian economics.

Like millions of Americans, Glenn does not identify with the Republicans or Democrats. Glenn is socially liberal and fiscally conservative. As such, he is unrepresented by the unnatural and limiting party dichotomy that connects economics and social policy as though one must be conservative or liberal in both fields to be valid. Unfortunately, Glenn, as with most Americans, was unaware of any electoral alternative, so he "usually voted Republican but was very uncomfortable with their attitude toward personal liberty." Thankfully, around 2000, Glenn's friend, WWE performer Sean Morley, introduced Glenn to the Libertarian Party...and he never turned back. If only every politically homeless American was so fortunate.

Glenn strongly identifies with the Libertarian philosophy. He believes, "every individual owns and is responsible for his own life." He thinks the government's purpose is limited and should not protect individuals from themselves. Glenn says: "The only role that government should play is to protect the individual's rights to life, liberty, and property, and, perhaps, to provide mediation between its citizens." Glenn is very concerned about the government's current fiscal and monetary policy: "The Fed's printing presses are working overtime trying to keep up with the politicians' promises." Glenn fears that the devaluation of the dollar and increased dependency on foreign countries to finance our debt could eventually lead to economic devastation and thus social upheaval.

Glenn is proud to support the Libertarian movement. He enjoys persuading people to consider Libertarian platforms: "The beauty of libertarianism is that you can find common ground with almost everyone." He under-

stands that one must "engage people in a non-confrontational way...When talking with a liberal, don't talk about economics right away; start with the stuff you agree on like privacy and civil liberties. When talking with a conservative, don't start with the War on Drugs, start with fiscal policy...then, when appropriate, explain how the War on Drugs results in bigger government and more taxation." This method can be very effective because most Americans have the same goals of peace, freedom and prosperity. We just have different understandings of how to achieve these goals, making it important to explain how Libertarian solutions work.

Glenn is a strong supporter of Ron Paul and believes that, "it is an exciting time to be a libertarian." He argues that the millions touched by Ron Paul's message will feel disenfranchised and disgusted with the major parties after the primaries. Glenn says, "They'll be looking for a home; it's up to the LP to reach them." We appreciate Glenn's contributions to the Libertarian Party and are proud to have him as a Lifetime Member.

Welcome to the Liberty Pledge Club!

Ron Andes
Eric Brown
Jeff Dennison
Matthew Fleming
Julian Fondren
Phil Hoaglund
Susan Hogarth
Pete Hovey
Andrew Kurzweil
Quincy Matthews
Stu McFarland
David McNelly
George Meyers
Paul Rider
Thomas Rose
Jim Shrader
Banner Segraves IV
Monty Shaw
Curt Webbe

Thank you for your generous support!

Libertarian Party of Texas' Candidate Round-Up

The Libertarian Party of Texas is on a mission. No, not the same mission as Blues Brothers, Jake and Elwood, but just as important nonetheless. The Libertarian Party of Texas (LPT) is on a quest to find 250 candidates to run in Texas for the 2008 election. The current record for Libertarian candidates is 168. With less than a year left until the elections, the search for candidates is entering the homestretch.



To help achieve the 250-candidate goal set by the LPT's state committee, LPT Chairman Pat Dixon and others from the party launched a 25-city tour across the state to talk to potential candidates and other Libertarian supporters. "The people that support us as candidates, activists, or donors deserve our appreciation," says Dixon. "We want to reach out to them and take the opportunity to talk to them in person, listen to them and find ways to grow the liberty movement."

The state tour concluded Nov. 4, and Dixon says they accrued 40 candidates, with another 40 people who have expressed interest in running. With a potential of 80 candidates already fielded from the mini-conferences, the LPT is well on their way to breaking last year's record. "The mini-conferences we held brought out over 300 people," says Dixon of the Sept. 8 through Nov. 4 tour. "I believe it motivates us to greater achievement in 2008."

The Libertarian Party's success largely revolves around its ability to field local candidates and elect them to office. "My expectation is to grow like a small business," Dixon says. His model for the success of the LPT is based upon the company Whole Foods, which began as a small company offering premium goods at slightly higher prices, and eventually grew into a nationwide chain. Dixon says this is exactly like the Libertarian Party.

A 25-city tour across a state the size of Texas is no easy feat to accomplish. "Our current staff of two, Wes Benedict and Art DiBianca, have much more work than they can complete," says Dixon, add-

ing they may be hiring a third staffer to help with the 2008 campaign season. "We are looking to raise the funds needed to budget for next year's staff and expenses to make 2008 another record year."

Other state Libertarian Parties across the nation should be taking notes on the successes in Texas. The returns from the 2007 election earlier this month were spectacular. After all, a 19 percent rate of victory for Libertarian candidates across the nation is a great accomplishment for the party. However, more work needs to be done and more candidates need to be fielded for the 2008 election.

Without a doubt, the Libertarian Party can only be as strong as the candidates that run under its endorsement. The influence of a political party is felt by the impact it has on the legislation that is produced. While Libertarians can have a great impact on policy through outside pressure, Libertarians in office are a sure-fire way to prove the effectiveness of Libertarian solutions to governmental problems.

Libertarians are most successful at the local level, where decisions are made that immediately impact the lives of the citizens who live where these laws are enacted. This is why the ground-up approach is so effective. Not only does it build a solid base for the Party to eventually grow and consistently elect national leaders, it proves that Libertarians do stand steadfast by the principles of smaller government, lower taxes and more freedom.

"Having more candidates on the ballot is good promotion," says Dixon. "When they see 'Libertarian' over and over again on their ballot...it gets noticed and promotes the Party."

There is still a great deal of work left to do in the next year in preparation for the 2008 election, but the LPT is working diligently to ensure they have a landmark year for the Party. "It would be great if I woke up tomorrow and found out everyone turned into a Libertarian overnight," Dixon says, but adds that unfortunately this will not be the case. However, the work of the LPT is sure to be the start to a successful future for the state party, and in turn, set a good example for the rest of the nation.

If you are interested in helping the Libertarian Party of Texas in its election efforts or would like to run yourself, please email Chair@lptexas.org.