



Published for friends and supporters of the Libertarian Party

Liberty Pledge

NEWSLETTER

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Election '94 Results: Ten Libertarians elected; party gains ballot status in four more states

The Republican tidal wave that swept through Election '94 resulted in mixed — but generally upbeat — tidings for the Libertarian Party.

While seven Libertarians were elected to public office and three re-elected, several high-profile races ended with somewhat disappointing vote totals, and the New Hampshire Libertarian legislative delegation was reduced from four members to two.

The party won ballot status in Wyoming, South Dakota, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Indiana, and maintained it in every state except Utah. The party is now on the ballot in 23 states for 1996, its best-ever showing coming out of an off-presidential-year election.

"We made tremendous strides in the area of ballot access. It's going to make a tremendous difference [for 1996]," said LP National Chair Steve Dasbach.

2.2 million voted Libertarian

Libertarian candidates won 396,000 votes for Congress, 648,000 votes for U.S. Senate, and 416,000 for governor. In all, it is estimated that more than 2.2 million people cast votes for Libertarians. "In the face of the Republican onslaught and a massive erosion of Democratic support, Libertarians in general held their share of the vote, or, in some cases, expanded it," said Dasbach.

Libertarian winners included Jim McClarin, New Hampshire House of Representatives; Dan Gallegos, Regional Transportation District Board, Colorado; David Morris, Advisory Neighborhood Commission, Washington, DC; Daniel Walker and Dick Bjornseth, Ochlockonee Soil & Water Conservation District Board, Florida; Tom Jamerson, Chesterfield County Soil & Water Commission, Virginia; and Steve Ziegler, Charles County Board of Education, Maryland.

Re-elected were Don Gorman, New Hampshire House of Representatives; Bonnie Flickinger, Moreno Valley City Council, California; and Sandy Webb, Simi Valley City Council, California.

On the negative side, two incumbent State Representatives in New Hampshire were defeated; Andy Borsa and Finlay Rothhaus, cutting the Libertarian delegation in half. But the Steve Winter for governor campaign garnered 4.5% of the vote, ensuring continued "major party" status in New Hampshire, and preserving a Libertarian

presidential primary in 1996.

Libertarians in NH blamed the legislative losses on an increased number of Republican candidates, which blocked many dual-nomination opportunities, and a structural change on most ballots, which lessened the votes Libertarians picked up from their cross-nominations.

"Obviously, the one disappointment about the election was the reduction of our delegation in New Hampshire," said Dasbach. "But, in hind sight, it's clear that the Republicans and Democrats learned from our past successes, and were able to more effectively block us this election. Now the challenge for us is to learn from their success, and come back even stronger in the next election."

Several highly touted campaign opportunities ended with lower than expected results: Jon Coon for U.S. Senate in Michigan won 4.5% of the vote, and Guy Wilson for U.S. Congress in California (District 37), in a two-way race against an indicted Democrat, won 21.9%.



Other closely watched races

In other closely watched races around the country, Terry Savage for State Assembly in California won 6.9%; Don Ernsberger for U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania won 1.7%; Mike Hurley for State Representative in Missouri won 23%; John Reda for State Representative in Delaware won 18%; Scott Kjar for State Assembly in Nevada won 6%; and Larry Pratt for State Assembly in Nevada won 27%.

Looking at the election from an ideological perspective, Dasbach said, "This election is being interpreted as a move in a Libertarian direction. The Republicans are all talking about cutting back the size of government. I mean, I'm skeptical that the Republicans will actually *do* anything to cut back government, but clearly that's what they believe the people wanted."

Dasbach also said he wasn't surprised that voters didn't automatically vote for Libertarians. "It's clear that voters thought the Democrats have failed. It's reasonable that [voters] would now give the Republicans a chance to fail before they would be willing to trust a new party. This is an expected process that we have to go through," he said.

Libertarian Party advocates return to constitutional government

ANOTHER OPTION:

Your vote Nov. 8 could create another third major party.

By BILL BROWN

In response to the opposing views in the Oct. 2 edition of the Star-Free Press, I would like to address the responses by both the Democratic and Republican county chairmen.

I would like to reference an article on page A6 of the same edition, entitled, "A new political party could rise before the end of the century," by the Associated Press. "Fifty-three percent of Americans think establishment of a third major party is a good idea, up 10 points from a decade ago..." If 53 percent have no faith in either of the two major parties, they could create a third major party on Nov. 8 when they vote.

In this election, not only are there Libertarians running for various offices, but other minor parties are on the ballots, including American Independent, Peace and Freedom and the Green parties. If all dissatisfied people of voting age were to vote for any other candidates, potentially, a major third party would be established overnight.

Since I am chairman of the Libertarian Party, I would hope that our party becomes that major third party. However, each citizen must make that choice at the polls, considering their conscience and informed decision.

The majority of the people allowed to vote do not because they do not believe their vote can make a difference. This is entirely false. If all should vote in this election and not vote for any major party candidates, there would be no Republicans or Democrats in office.

The Libertarian Party platform rarely changes from year to year, with the exception of minor changes in phrasing, except at times when new political issues become relevant.

The party's statement of principles begins: "We... challenge the cult of the omnipotent state and defend the rights of the individual. We hold that all individuals

have the right to exercise dominion over their own lives, and have the right to live in whatever manner they choose so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal rights of others to live in whatever manner they choose.

"Governments throughout history have regularly operated on the opposite principle, that the state has the right to dispose of the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labor..."

"We... deny the right of government to do these things, and hold that, where governments exist, their sole function is to protect the rights of any individual; namely (1) the right to life... (2) the right to liberty of speech and action...; and (3) the right to property — accordingly, we oppose all government interferences with private property such as confiscation, nationalization and eminent domain, and support the prohibition of robbery, trespass and fraud."

The Democratic Party leaders talk about a caring and compassionate government. Is it compassionate to take, by force of law, from those who have lawfully earned their property? Is it caring for a government to take from some to give to others? It is certainly not what our Founding Fathers envisioned. When they established our nation, they specifically limited the powers of the federal government by specifically enumerating those powers to be granted.

In my reading of the U.S. Constitution, I do not find where the



Congress that first passed the budgets creating the huge deficits. Likewise, in 1992, it was President George Bush's compromise with the Democratic Congress to raise our taxes, which led to the recession.

Our Founding Fathers believed in allowing individuals the right to do anything that they pleased, so long as they did not violate the rights of others. If a person violated another's rights, then and only then would government step in to take action.

If left to his own devices, a person could have unlimited freedom and the resulting success or failure. Many today want unlimited freedom but, unfortunately, they do not want the corresponding responsibilities. A person should do what he wants, but if he fails, he should take the responsibility, and if he succeeds, he should be allowed to keep the fruits of his initiative, capital and labor. This is the essence of libertarianism, as opposed to the two major

unconstitutional acts in such areas as energy, health and environment.

Our federal government was established for one reason: to unify each state in defense of each other. No state, standing alone, could have withstood an invasion from outside forces, but if all states stood together, they were unbeatable. Other than self-preservation the states desired to remain sovereign and handle their own affairs as they saw fit.

It is time that we return to a constitutional government before it is too late. As we approach the 21st century, it is imperative that the citizens of this nation force our leaders to choose freedom over socialism. As the citizens of some of the major powers of the world are attempting to throw off socialism, moving toward freedom, we in America are throwing off freedom, moving toward socialism. We must reverse course now before it is too late.

While my remarks may seem to pick out various items with which I disagree with Mr. Starr, with a few exceptions, I disagree with many or most of the Republican officials for the same reasons. To be true to each other and true to a political philosophy, we must first have a political philosophy.

The Libertarian Party is the only party that has consistent answers because there is a consistent philosophy. The philosophy comes from the Declaration of Independence, a document that is celebrated yearly, yet not read often, and the U.S. Constitution. While individual Libertarians may disagree on certain political questions now and again, their answers still reflect the basic philosophy.

The Libertarian Party has a consistent record of support for the individual over the state — the only party with such a record. Remember, the lesser of the two evils is still evil. I urge all of you to vote Libertarian in the upcoming election. If all of you vote your conscience, a real difference will be made.

(Bill Brown of Camarillo is chairman of the Ventura County Libertarian Party and the party's candidate for the 23rd congressional district. — Editor)

federal government is empowered to act in the areas that county Democratic Party Chairman Hank Starr believes are the accomplishments under Democratic presidents.

While I agree with Mr. Starr that the Republican administrations must bear some of the blame for the deficit and the recession, Mr. Starr seems to have a selective memory. The Congress is the only body that may vote upon a budget, which is then signed by the president. President Ronald Reagan should have vetoed all proposed budgets that were not balanced, but it was a Democratic

parties. The Republican candidates, for the most part, still talk about limiting the federal government's powers, but once in office, vote for bills that increase the federal government.

Republicans helped President Bill Clinton pass the Brady Bill and the Crime Bill. Republicans and Democrats voted for higher taxes and regulations. Republicans have allowed the Democrats to continue confiscating people's private property under the classification of wetlands. Republicans and Democrats continue to vote for other

Feisty Libertarians getting their word out

▲ *The Star-Free Press*
Ventura, California
October 11, 1994

► *The Payson Roundup*
Payson, Arizona
October 12, 1994

by Carroll Cox
Staff Writer

We keep hearing about polls reporting the sullen mood of Americans, their dissatisfaction with the U.S. political system and politicians, their dismay at the poor performance of the public education system and the inability of public agencies to control crime. Republicans blame President Clinton and his administration for the bad mood and Democrats blame negative, obstructive Republicans for not giving the administration a chance.

Libertarians say the two major parties just don't get it.

The real issue is freedom, contend members of the nation's third largest political party. Or rather the escalating loss of individual liberties at the hands of both parties.

Libertarians are trying to educate Americans to re-think the fundamental role of government as described in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

The Libertarian Party was formed in Denver, Colo. in

1971. In the 1992 elections, over 3.7 million Americans voted for national or state-wide Libertarian candidates. Approximately 100 Libertarians hold office nationwide and they believe the numbers would be far greater if election laws controlled by the two major parties didn't serve to eliminate competition. A major goal of Libertarians is reform of election laws.

The basic premise of Libertarianism is that Americans should be free to make personal choices and earn their living the way they see fit, as long as they don't harm others, saying force or fraud against others should be punished swiftly and consistently. They believe the expansion of government into every aspect of our personal and business lives increasingly violates the life, liberty and property of citizens, rather than protecting them as our founding documents attempted to ensure.

According to Libertarian gubernatorial candidate John Buttrick, the nationwide unrest we are seeing is the result of peoples' rights being infringed upon too much for too long and

the growing awareness that it is time to shift government from its high-speed assumption of power into low gear service.

The Libertarian stance on some major issues are:

EDUCATION: Reform our poorly performing system by honoring the rights of parents and children to choose the kind of education they want. Libertarians would end compulsory attendance laws and allow educational tax credits. They believe tax credits would improve educational methods, results and accountability by promoting competition.

CRIME AND CIVIL LIBERTIES: Libertarians believe the purpose of law enforcement is to stop violent crimes against persons and properties, not to abuse people with peaceful but unpopular lifestyles. They cite an American Bar Association study estimating that 50 percent of a cop-on-the-beat's time is spent on crimes that have no victims and maintain that American law enforcement resources are badly misused.

Libertarians strongly uphold

the right of peaceful citizens to defend themselves and to own firearms. They claim that gun control laws not only violate civil liberties, but are ineffective in reducing crime and may even increase it.

Libertarians favor programs which require criminals to make restitution to their victims.

TAXES AND SPENDING: Libertarians are pressuring all levels of government and are organizing at the grass roots to lessen the tax and regulatory burden on Americans.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS: Libertarians have adopted the foreign policy principle of Thomas Jefferson: "Peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none." They favor the U. S. government ending all subsidies to foreign governments and immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from other nations.

For more information on the Libertarian Party and its candidates, call (602) 248-8425 or pick up a special election issue of the Arizona Libertarian newspaper at *The Roundup*.

Libertarians hopeful of their ballot future

By Flynn McRoberts
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

To Libertarians, it was like a glimpse of the Holy Grail.

Accustomed to electoral obscurity, the Libertarian Party was gleeful with results of a recent Times-Mirror poll that suggested a majority of Americans believe that the country needs a third major political party.

So though the party's full slate of statewide candidates in Illinois has modest goals for the Nov. 8 election—getting the required 5 percent of the vote to become an officially established party—Libertarians are dreaming much bigger.

David Kelley, this year's Libertarian candidate for Illinois governor, recalled that "when I started running in the early 1980s, people could barely pronounce the 'L' word." And he didn't mean "liberal."

"Now they recognize that Libertarians stand for much smaller government and much less taxes. And that's a start," said Kelley, 44, a construction management consultant from Rockford.

Founded in 1971 by Republicans and a few Democrats angered by then-President Richard Nixon's wage and price controls, the Libertarians are the country's most active third party.

This year, about 65 percent of Americans will be able to vote for a Libertarian. That's three times the number of voters who will be able to cast ballots for the next-most active third party, the U.S. Taxpayers Party, according to Perry Willis, national director of the Libertarian Party.

Nationwide, 662 Libertarian candidates are running in 45 states for offices ranging from city council to U.S. Senate, Willis said. There are 125 Libertarians now in office at various levels of government across the country.

In Illinois, Libertarians hold about a dozen local, non-partisan elective offices. But they haven't had the sort of success of Libertarians in Alaska and New Hampshire, where four Libertarians serve as state legislators, according to the national organization.

The party is known for its bold proposals. A sampling from its

Campaign '94

1994 state platform includes: legalizing drugs, decriminalizing gambling "instead of using casinos as rewards for insider connections" and privatizing the education, welfare and mass-transit systems.

Michael Ginsberg, the Libertarian candidate for Illinois comptroller, wants to eliminate that position and "aggressively" bid out every state contract that exceeds \$10 million.

Currently, state law requires bidding for most contracts but exempts some, such as those for professional services.

"To me, this race is about one thing—how do we reduce and control the spiraling cost of our government," said Ginsberg, 30, who works in the purchasing department of United Airlines.

On certain controversial issues, the Libertarians try to fence-it-so as not to offend any potential party members. Kelley said his stance on abortion is that "there shouldn't be any tax subsidy for [it] because that's morally reprehensible to the pro-life portion of the citizenry. But on the other hand, we don't believe that abortion should be considered criminal conduct either."

Kelley said he has been warmly received by "a lot of different groups who are concerned about the status of individual liberty in our country and our state this year, who are extremely discontented with the lack of options at the top of the ticket offered by the Republicans and the Democrats."

Those supporters, he said, include gun owners, taxpayers and "the Christian right, especially the pro-life camp."

He said the party's chief goal is to cobble enough support from such groups to win at least 5 percent of the vote. That would give the party ballot status for 1996, meaning it would have to collect only a fraction of the 25,000 signatures it now must gather.

Kelley said he is "preserving a big push" for this week, when all of his radio ads will start.

"I can't afford TV commercials," he said.

Libertarians building a base



DAVE McNEELY

This year, the none-of-the-above column on the Texas ballot is once again the Libertarian Party. The Libertarians have posted candidates for eight statewide races.

Some people vote for Libertarians because of their anti-government ideas: They think the government should protect our borders and deliver the mail — and are having second thoughts about the mail. But many of the Libertarians' votes also come from people turned off by the Democratic and Republican candidates.

None of the Libertarians expects to win — at least, not yet.

"The reason for running is to provide voters a choice," said Joe Barnett of Arlington, a past state president of the Libertarian Party and this year's media spokesman. Votes for their candidates signify a desire for change that will push the other candidates to alter their stances, he said.

In the 1960s, the Constitution and Conservative parties were the protest slot in some races. In the 1970s, it was La Raza Unida and the Socialist Workers Party.

For hard-core Democrats and Republicans, these third parties are a nuisance and cloud the results of some races.

The Libertarians first got on the Texas ballot in 1980. The other third parties faded. This year, the Libertarians are the only none-of-the-above slot.

The Libertarians used to have to collect petition signatures to get on the ballot — 1 percent of the vote in the previous governor's race, and from voters who had not participated in the Republican or Democratic primary.

But under Texas law, if they got more than 5 percent of the vote in any statewide general election race, they were guaranteed ballot status for the next election without collecting signatures. If they received more than 2 percent for governor, they got ballot status for the next two elections.

In 1986, they won their ballot access breakthrough.

Republicans did not oppose Democratic Comptroller Bob Bullock or Treasurer Ann Richards that year. But Libertarians did.

Libertarian George Meeks got 267,872 of 2,684,530 votes against Mr. Bullock, or 9.98 percent. Libertarian Robert F. Reid got 220,024 of 2,645,860, or 8.32 percent, against Ms. Richards. Either race qualified them for the 1988 ballot.

In 1988, in a Court of Criminal Appeals race in 1988 in which there was no Republican, Libertarian Egon Tausch got 225,018 votes, or 6.1 percent, against Democrat Chuck Campbell. And in a 1990 Court of Criminal Appeals race with no GOP candidate, Libertarian Carol Caul got 444,434 votes, or 15.1 percent, against Democrat Bill White.

Also in 1990, Ms. Richards won the governor's job with less than a majority (49.5 percent) over Republican Clayton Williams because Libertarian Jeff Daiell got 129,128 votes, or 3.3 percent, of the almost 3.9 million votes cast. That qualified the Libertarians for the ballot in 1992 and 1994.

"Part of our strategy as a party is to maintain our ballot status," Mr. Barnett said.

For insurance, they like to have candidates in races where one of the major parties has stayed out — though those are fewer now that Texas is a two-party state.

This year, the Republicans stayed out of only two statewide races: against Democrats Mike McCormick for presiding judge of the Court of Criminal Appeals and Raul Gonzalez for the Texas Supreme Court. Mr. Gonzalez had been opposed by Republican Oliver Kitzman, but Mr. Kitzman honored his pledge to drop out after the business-oriented Mr. Gonzalez beat Rene Haas in the primary.

The Libertarians did not field a candidate against Mr. McCormick. But Mr. Gonzalez's Libertarian opponent is John Hawley of Dallas. Mr. Hawley may get more votes than any previous Libertarian candidate, because of bias against a Hispanic surname in some areas.

Dave McNeely writes for the Austin American-Statesman.

- ▲ The Dallas Morning News ★ Dallas, Texas ★ October 10, 1994
- ▼ Los Alamos Monitor ★ Los Alamos, New Mexico ★ October 11, 1994

Candidate says FDA an 'agency run amok'

By EVELYN VIGIL
Monitor Editor/Publisher

To Ed Nagel, Libertarian candidate for U.S. Congress, the Food and Drug Administration's bid to regulate vitamins is a good example of a federal agency run amok.

Nagel was in town recently to talk about his fight against the FDA attempt to regulate vitamins. Nagel said that he is believer in vitamins, and he said he grew up with poor health habits. Learning to eat properly helped him to trim down, and taking vitamins has helped him to remain healthy, he said.

Now he's alarmed at the FDA's attempt to regulate supplements.

During a recent meeting of the Los Alamos Rotary Club, Nagel told the story of Rodger Sless of Albuquerque, whose warehouse and business were raided on April 8, 1993, by armed agents of the FDA, Customs, and the Postal Service. A package containing GH3, a dietary supplement otherwise known as Gerovital H3, was seized by custom agents, Nagel said.

Nagel read from a letter to the editor he sent out on June 14, which pointed out that Sless's 12-year-old business was "selling vitamins and dietary supplements to anxious,

well-informed, willing and satisfied customers all over the country. Despite knowing of other government-led raids on alternative health clinics and vitamin distributors, Sless believed he was right to continue."

"But," Nagel said, "as Voltaire warns us: 'It's dangerous to be right when the government is wrong.'"

"To government agents of the FDA, Rodger Sless was in the business of selling a 'drug,' requiring long-term government surveillance, postal inspection of private communications, and an unannounced three-car, wheel-screaming 'raid' in the parking lot of his Albuquerque office, where a SWAT-type team of agents ... pointed loaded guns and screamed: 'Hands on your heads.'"

"The effect was terrifying," Nagel said. "At least one worker suffered extreme emotional distress. Although there was no shooting this time (one among more than two dozen such raids), many have been injured by this action, Rodger Sless most of all."

"On that April day in '93," Nagel said, "these federal agents proceeded to confiscate \$30,000 worth of key equipment and supplies. Sless

puters, files, vitamins, financial records — that could enable Rodger Sless to conduct his business as usual. How did this affect him? At trial 15 months later, Rodger recalls in his own words: 'My life stopped.'"

On Jan. 4 of this year, Sless was indicted "for introducing an unapproved new drug into interstate commerce," and 14 other related counts, all but one a felony, Nagel said.

Why? Nagel asked. No FDA approval is required for vitamins, he said, but it's clear that the FDA wants to change this rule.

On June 17, 1994, a federal court jury cleared Sless of 11 of 15 counts in the indictment Sless' attorney, Nancy Lord, a physician/attorney from Atlanta, styled the case as an issue of personal choice and government over-reaching.

Many people who use supplements testified at Sless' trial.

Nagel said this is a critical issue, and it is being fought in Congress. He also said Sen. Orrin Hatch's bill in the Senate to allow for vitamin and supplement use is a better version than the bill pushed by U.S.

- ▲ Chicago Tribune ★ Chicago, Illinois ★ October 31, 1994
- ▼ Daily News Sun ★ Sun City, Arizona ★ October 22, 1994

Libertarians live up political season

In a more idyllic political system, partisanship would have no place in elections. Nonetheless, we congratulate the Libertarian Party on its showing in the 1994 election season, during which the party is fielding some dozen or so candidates for federal and state offices.



We also applaud public-interest groups such as the League of Women Voters that have insisted that the Libertarians, in those races in which they have candidates, be represented in debates and candidate forums.

While we endorse no platform of any party, the Libertarians at least are bringing some provocative ideas to the table. And the established major parties both could use some shaking up.

3rd-party hopeful scores in debate

While the two major-party candidates were busy hurling insults at each other, Libertarian Joseph Killian was winning over the unconverted.

By Dana DiFilippo
Courier Times

It was campaigning the old-fashioned way — jump on your opponent and sink your teeth in.

But the constituents were the ones crying for mercy yesterday, after state Rep. Robert "Tommy" Tomlinson and his Democratic opponent John Cordisco spent much of a candidates' forum slinging mud.

After the smoke cleared, the few undecided voters in the audience knew one thing — Joseph Killian is not the oddball popular opinion holds many third-party candidates to be.

"Instead of telling you where they stand, all (Cordisco and Tomlinson) did was condemn each other," said Bill Boychuck of Falls. "Joseph Killian was the only one talking about principles instead of personalities."

Levittown resident Coleen McDonnell agreed, saying, "He was really straightforward in dealing with the issues."

Killian, the Libertarian candidate challenging Cordisco and Tomlinson for the seat now held by the retiring state Sen. H. Craig Lewis, called for less governmental interference in citizens' lives.

"Consumers pay over a trillion dollars a year to keep up with governmental regulations and licensing," Killian said. "Here's a good example for you: The Lord's prayer has 66 words. The Gettysburg Address has 286 words. The Declaration of Independence has 1,322 words. And regulation on the sale of cabbage, ladies and gentlemen, has 26,911 words — you need a truckload of books to run a produce stand. Government takes the 'free' out of free enterprise."

Killian deplored the government for "looting" businesses by imposing choking mandates, such as requiring employers to provide health care for their workers.

Third major party? You bet

H. Ross Perot will never be president, and his United We Stand organization might never win a congressional seat.

But the Texas billionaire will have performed a service much more valuable for his country. He made it possible for millions to vote for an independent or third-party candidate without the usual hesitation about throwing away their votes. A recent Times-Mirror poll found that 53 percent of Americans believe the nation needs a third major political party.

Americans have lost faith in their two-party system because both have betrayed their founding ideologies. Despite Democratic rhetoric about their standing for the middle class, the party is the refuge of those who still believe that the Great Society social welfare system and the higher taxes that it fostered are the answer to what ails America. The Republicans, meanwhile, are fond of saying that they believe in lower taxes and less government; in reality, the Republicans have failed abysmally to deliver on either.

And the voters — correctly — have come to understand that the two parties are nearly indistinguishable.

Major-party candidates decide what they believe based on what pollsters and focus groups tell them the voters want them to believe. They then tape 30-second television spots intended to elicit a reflexive response and do their best to avoid saying anything controversial for how-ever long the campaign lasts.

And that is politics in America 1994.

That state of affairs will come to an end within just a few years. Illinois hardly reflects the depth of feeling among people who feel disenfranchised and betrayed by the existing two-party system. Our overly restrictive state laws — passed by Republican and Democratic



BOB UNGER

legislators desperate to preserve the current system — make it very difficult for third parties to get their candidates on the ballot.

This year, the Libertarian Party is the only other party fielding a full slate of candidates for statewide office (others, including the Populist Party and the Harold Washington Party, are running county candidates). The United Independents Party failed to get the required number of signatures filed on time to have its candidates listed, and nobody else was able to meet the state requirement that the party assemble signatures on petitions from at least 5 percent of the number of votes cast in the previous election.

Efforts to relax the requirements have never gotten anywhere because the rules are made by the Republicans and Democrats in the Legislature, who — if nothing else — share an interest in preserving the status quo.

But sooner or later, that will change even here — despite the collusion of the Illinois press and the electronic media with the kingpins in the Republican and Democratic Party.

(The Libertarian candidate for governor, David Kelley, whose name will appear on the ballot Nov. 8, was not allowed to participate in Wednesday's League of Women Voters-sponsored gubernatorial debate — to the discredit of us in the professional

press, who should have refused to be party to the debate for failing to include him. Further, the Illinois Associated Press Editors Association decided against inviting Mr. Kelley to its own debate between the candidates held Friday in Champaign).

I am not willing to predict that the Libertarians will be the next major party, but the Libertarians are building a broader coalition of support from gun owners, members of the Christian right, motorcyclists opposed to helmet laws, members of United We Stand and the United Independents parties.

To be sure, the Libertarians need to field more candidates for school boards and city councils, but nobody will be surprised if the party gets 5 percent of the vote in the statewide races for constitutional office in November. Should they capture 10 percent or more, they will force the Legislature to consider easing the laws for other parties to get their candidates on the ballot.

It may not be long before Christian conservatives take steps to break from the Republican and Democratic parties over abortion and other moral questions. Some cynics argue that Christians and politics should not mix, but strong candidacies like that of the Rev. Dennis Higgins of Jacksonville's Lincoln Avenue Baptist Church — who was a candidate in the Republican primary for the 18th congressional seat — are proof that Christian conservatives can organize an effective voting bloc and decide elections as a result.

The dilution of Illinois politics by lookalike Democrats and Republicans is nearly complete. Look for one or more alternative parties to force their way in over the next few years.

Bob Unger is editor of the Journal-Courier.

- ▲ Jacksonville
Journal-Courier
Jacksonville, Illinois
October 23, 1994
- ◀ Bucks County
Courier Times
Levittown,
Pennsylvania
October 14, 1994
- The Arizona
Republic
Phoenix, Arizona
October 28, 1994

BENSON'S VIEW

