

# LIBERTY PLEDGE

## NEWSLETTER

Libertarian National Committee, Inc. • 1444 Duke St. • Alexandria, VA 22314 • Phone: (202) 333-0008 • Fax: (202) 333-0072  
www.LP.org October 2015

### Half in U.S. Continue to Say Government is an Immediate Threat

Excerpted from *Gallup.com*  
by Frank Newport  
Published on September 21, 2015

PRINCETON, N.J.—Almost half of Americans, 49%, say the federal government poses “an immediate threat to the rights and freedoms of ordinary citizens,” similar to what was found in previous surveys conducted over the last five years. When this question was first asked in 2003, less than a third of Americans held this attitude.

The latest results are from Gallup’s Sept. 9–13 Governance poll. The lower percentage of Americans agreeing in 2003 that the federal government posed an immediate threat likely reflected the more positive attitudes about government evident after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The percentage gradually increased to 44% by 2006, and then reached the 46% to 49% range in four surveys conducted since 2010.

#### What’s Behind the Belief that the Government Is an Immediate Threat?

The current survey contains an open-ended question asking those who agree that the government is an immediate threat, to explain why they feel this way.

Overall, Americans who agree that the government is an immediate threat tend to respond with very general complaints echoing the theme that the federal government is too big and too powerful, and that it has too many laws. They also cite nonspecific allegations that the government violates freedoms and civil liberties, and that there is too much government in people’s private lives.

The most frequently mentioned specific threats involve gun control laws and violations of the Second Amendment to the Constitution, mentioned by 12% who perceive the government to be an immediate threat.

Other general complaints enunciated by smaller numbers of those who think the government poses an immedi-

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### Polling: American majority wants third major political party

Excerpted from *Examiner.com*  
By Linda Ann Nickerson  
Published on September 25, 2015

Folks say two’s a-plenty, but perhaps not when it comes to America’s political parties. Six out of 10 Americans surveyed by a September 2015 Gallup poll said the nation needs another major party on the scene. The findings, announced September 25, point to dissatisfaction with the present system, which is virtually bipartisan. The 2015 results are comparable to peaking numbers favoring a third major party in a similar study two years ago.

Certainly, multiple political parties exist in the United States. Besides the Democratic Party and the Republican Party (also known as the Grand Old Party, or the GOP), listings include Constitution Party, Green Party, Libertarian Party, and many smaller groups. Currently, dozens of different political parties qualify for inclusion on American voting ballots, if these groups manage to field registered candidates meeting the requirements for running for office.

However, the Constitution, Green, and Libertarian parties seem to be the only three minor groups that enjoy recognition in 10 or more states.

When it comes to major players on the national political scene in the U.S., the focus remains on the Democratic and Republican parties. Could that tide be turning somewhat? Do American voters want a third major party enough to form and champion such an entity?

Intriguingly, several top early Presidential candidates for the 2016 election are relative newcomers to the political arena (at least officially), rather than partisan veterans. These include Republican Ben Carson, Republican Carly Fiorina, and Republican Donald Trump. Democrat Bernie Sanders has been known as an independent. Thus, the Gallup findings, indicating lots of Americans may seek new political viewpoints and fresh faces, may confirm the current momentum of these prospects for the nation’s top office. •

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# Is 2016 the Year of Campaigning Dangerously?

Excerpted from *The Daily Caller*  
By Bruce Majors  
Published on September 25, 2015

House Speaker John Boehner announced his resignation today, only a year after House Majority Leader Eric Cantor was defeated by a tea-party newbie in a primary. In the GOP presidential nomination race, three candidates who have never held office are in the lead, holding between them the support of almost two-thirds of Republican primary voters. It's open season on establishment politicians.

Meanwhile, the Democratic National Committee is facing rebellion, having decided to support, for now, the coronation of Hillary Clinton, by cutting debates back from the 28 it held in 2008, to only 6 for the 2016 primary season. The Democratic group AllowDebate, organized by young progressive Democrats often supporting Senator Bernie Sanders or former Governor Martin O'Malley, have been heckling DNC chairwoman Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz whenever she speaks in public.

*It's the year of the outsider*, the commentariat tells us.  
But that may prove true in more ways than they think.

[Another] threat to an establishment-controlled election is a lawsuit to be filed September 29th in federal court by former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson, against the Commission on Presidential Debates.

A former local Ohio television journalist, Ben Swann, with Ron Paulish predilections and a new-media platform, claims to be "actively in dialogue with both candidates," Senator Rand Paul and Senator Bernie Sanders, [about holding] a libertarian-leaning capitalist versus democratic socialist debate, before the GOP or the Democrats have even finished selecting a nominee.

If Swann pulls off this event, it's hard to believe other venues, including the exploding number of new-media platforms, won't copy it, with debates featuring Senator Ted Cruz against Governor O'Malley, etc. They might not be carried on live TV, but clips will be replayed the next day, and they will earn the debaters interviews and other coverage.

[Another] threat to an establishment-controlled election is a lawsuit to be filed September 29th in federal court by former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson, against the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD). Johnson, who left the GOP to win the nomination of the Libertarian Party in 2012, is best known recently for a humorous stunt at CPAC2015, where he mimed cardiac arrest while in a debate with a woman who claimed marijuana increases the risk of heart attack. [He] seems to plan on trying to get the Libertarian nomination again for 2016.

Estimated to run up \$800,000 in legal bills, the suit has been put together by Reagan administration Constitutional lawyer Bruce Fein,

## New and renewing Liberty Pledgers

Ray S. Acosta	Stephanie Lazo
Luke Anderson	Jonathan J. Lee
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Roger M. Baker	Shawn Mahaney
Marel K. Bates	Joseph J. Maschak
Keith N. Binam	Aaron Michel
Henry C. Boschen	Jason Mills
John M. Brendel	Edward L. Morgan
Thomas Brown	James O'Connor
Tyler S. Condon	Charles B. Olson
Austin Cook	Steven R. Osborne
Jim Crawford	Kenneth J. Parmalee
Forrest Crist	Richard Perkins
Richard Dix	James Pettit
Harold F. Donoho	Mark Pruitt
Jerome Eisen	Ethan Reilly
Patrick Ellis	James P. Rongstad
Marc A. Feldman	Rachel Schneider
Spencer C. Flagg	Steven Schwartz
Katherine Florentine	Scott E. Stafford
Perry Forstrom	Steven D. Turley
Richard Granson	Jon W. Ven Johnson
James P. Gray	William Verboncoeur
Thomas Greene	Dustin Wade
Thomas G. Hale	Peter Webster
Donna Harmon	Brandon Wellman
Lynn A. House	Spencer Wong
Steve A. Hoverman	Ashley Wood
W. Hayward Hulick	Douglas Wood
Cecil A. Ince	Christopher L. Wright
Thomas B. Kilbride	Adrian Wyllie
Jolie M. LaChance	

whose work on opening up political debate includes getting rid of the Fairness Doctrine—an FCC policy which had the result of coercing broadcasters into presenting only two centrist viewpoints: liberal Democrats, and Rockefeller, establishment, Republicans.

Fein's Johnson suit will be an anti-trust suit, alleging that the CPD, populated and controlled

## Dangerous Campaigning

*continued from page 3*

by only establishment Democrat and Republican Party operatives, limits the candidates allowed to debate [to] only the nominees of those two parties—even if other candidates like Libertarians or Greens have managed the extremely difficult task of being on the majority of state ballots, so they could earn enough Electoral College votes to win an election, if voters knew they were running and considered them viable because they were presented in the same way on television and in the debates as the GOP and Democratic candidates [are].

Fein further alleges that the [CPD] is a business in restraint of trade, since the Republican and Democratic [in the] consultant class raise billions of dollars now to pay themselves during the campaign season, and raising the money is dependent on excluding independent competition for donor dollars.

So though most might still think it unlikely, courts may be deciding within a year whether the Presidential Debates will for the first time include a Libertarian or a Green. As many Americans have griped in the past few years, what SCOTUS or the other courts will do may not be what you'd expect.

In recent years, some of the more pre-

sentable Libertarian candidates—like Robert Sarvis, who ran for Governor in Virginia in 2013—have been getting 5 percent of the vote, instead of their traditional 1–2 percent, even while spending much fewer dollars per vote than Democrats or Republicans.

The two-party duopoly is somewhat baked into the American electoral system, unlike European parliamentary systems. The U.S. has winner-take-all jurisdictions, usually featuring two

...The two-party system has been suffering, with 40 percent of voters deciding not to vote for either of its candidates.

candidates, one of whom, usually a Democrat, will tax Americans and regulate away their choices and opportunities, to buy the votes of organized interest groups like government-sector unions and bailed-out banks, and [the other], usually Republican, opponent, who often only says he won't [tax and regulate] as much or as quickly. But the two-party system has been suffering, with 40 percent of voters deciding not to vote for either of its candidates.

It's interesting that all of these things—outsiders like Carson, Trump,

and Fiorina, who can set up their own fundraising websites, rank-and-file Democrats, who can tweet flash-mob locations to heckle Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz, new-media journalists, who can contemplate sponsoring a non-sanctioned bipartisan debate, and even Governor Johnson's fundraising for an anti-trust lawsuit—are greatly enhanced by the Internet and social media. The two-party system, and the ruling cabals of consultants and [of] the political class within those two parties, [have] long been protected by ballot-access laws keeping independents off the ballots, [by] the oligopoly of a few TV networks and newspapers or press services deciding who can be covered, and [by] the party machinery deciding who will get its pre-organized volunteers. Just as Amazon, Netflix, PayPal, SilkRoad, Uber, Lyft and other Internet-based businesses have been wiping out older models, 2016 may be the year that technological change finally begins to break the two-party monopoly. •

**Correction:** In our August issue, the biography of author Sheldon Richman was inadvertently truncated ("The Art of Incremental Change," page 4). It should have concluded: *Sheldon Richman is...chairman of the board of trustees of the Center for a Stateless Society.* —Editor

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## “It’s All About the Debates”

Excerpted from *Presidential Debate News*  
Published on October 6, 2015

[The election of President of the United States is] all about the debates.

The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) is a privately funded organization run by the former head of the RNC, and a former DNC and Clinton operative. They make all the rules for who gets into the fall debates. The CPD is supposed to be a “non-partisan” group that makes “objective” rules, but the members are all Democratic and Republican Party insiders chosen by other party insiders.

Since 2000, they have used an unfair rule that forces independent candidates to meet an impossible polling threshold only seven weeks before the general election. No candidate who did not compete in a primary has scaled this barrier since the televised debates began, in 1960. Not even Ross Perot would have met the criteria in 1992, when the Bush and Clinton campaigns both decided it was in their best interests to have Perot in the debates.

More than a year ago, the Directors of the CPD were presented with extensive evidence demonstrating that the margin of error in a three-way race for President would be eight percent in a September poll taken just two months before the

general election. Now, less than a year before the first debate will be held, with ballot-access deadlines looming, the CPD has done nothing to change the rule.

Pollsters in yesterday’s *POLITICO* story issued a “unanimous warning” not to trust polls for the purposes of determining debate access.

“It’s like asking a scale that can only tell pounds to measure ounces,” said Cliff Zukin, the past president of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. “They’re just not that finely calibrated.... I think polls can do a good job talking about tiers of candidates in name recognition. That’s all

The CPD is supposed to be a “non-partisan” group...but the members are all Democratic and Republican Party insiders....

that polls can do. But they can’t tell the difference between Bobby Jindal, who’s not in the debate, and Chris Christie, who is.”

The time for the CPD to act is now: Open up the presidential debates. Admit what the rest of Americans—and now even the pollsters—already know: the current system of determining who gets on the debate stage isn’t fair and it isn’t working. •

### Half Say Gov’t is Threat

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ate threat include perceptions that the government is “socialist,” that the government spends too much, that it picks winners and losers such as the wealthy, or racial and ethnic minorities, that it is too involved in things it shouldn’t be, and that it violates the separation of powers.

More specific complaints—again voiced by small numbers of those who agree with the threat statement—focus on freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the overuse of police and law enforcement, government surveillance of private citizens including emails and phone records, government involvement in gay marriage issues, over-regulation of business, overtaxing, the healthcare law, and immigration.

Still, the persistent finding in recent years that half of the population views the government as an immediate threat underscores the degree to which the role and power of government remains a key issue of our time. As a case in

### Local LP affiliate pushes back on proposed ridesharing regs

On September 22, the Palm Beach County, Florida Commission voted to extend a temporary agreement that allows Uber to operate in the county, and to delay a vote on new regulations for ride-sharing apps such as Uber and Lyft.

Their decision was in part a reaction to a press release from the LP affiliate in the county, which stated, “While the Palm Beach County Commission suggests the proposed amendments [provide] flexibility and public safety,

point, a question in this same survey asked Americans to name the most important problem facing the nation, and found that issues related to government were the most frequently mentioned. Plus, numerous other measures show that the people give their government some of the lowest approval and trust

the Libertarian Party of Palm Beach County opposes the changes because it limits small companies from entering the vehicles-for-hire local market. The numerous regulatory requirements, including new FBI background checks, increased insurance requirements, and a one-time \$10,000 application fee, [limit] competition, resulting in poorer service to our community. The party argues that free markets are a more efficient regulator than [is] bureaucratic red tape.” •

ratings in the measures’ history.

From the people’s perspective, then, a focus on the appropriate role for government should be at the forefront of the nation’s continuing political discourse and should be a key point of debate in the current presidential election campaigns. •