

LIBERTY PLEDGE

NEWSLETTER

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

www.LP.org

May 2008

Decision Coming in LPNC Ballot Access Case

by Sean Haugh
Political Director for the Libertarian Party

As the Libertarian Party of North Carolina wraps up their 2008 ballot access drive by turning in more than 108,000 signatures, a decision is pending in the NCLP's court challenge to ballot access restrictions in that state. The trial took place for three days earlier in the month and was the climax of more than two years of legal battle against the state by both state Libertarian and Green Parties.

Currently, NC law dictates that a "new party" has to collect signatures equaling 2 percent of the number of voters in the last gubernatorial election. According to LPNC Chair Barbara Howe, this number could exceed 80,000 signatures for the 2012 elections. At the conclusion to this year's ballot access drive, which will be the fifth largest petitioning effort for a political party in US history, it will mark the fifth time the LP has had to qualify as a "new" political party in NC.

"Our suit alleges that there are two sets of election law in North Carolina," said Political Director and former LPNC Executive Director Sean Haugh. "There's one set with special benefits for Democrats and Republicans, and one with special burdens for everyone else. Our lawsuit isn't only for the Libertarian and Green parties. We're fighting so everyone who doesn't want to be a Democrat or Republican can play an equal part in our elections."

Besides the 2 percent threshold for petition signatures to get on the ballot, the two parties are also asking the court to strike down the requirement of obtaining 2 percent of the vote for Governor or President in order to retain ballot access. Additionally, the LPNC argues that a statute forcing all registered voters with a party that loses ballot access to choose another party needs to be struck down. The Libertarian Party had 13,006 registered voters before they were decertified in 2005.

Wake County Superior Court Judge Robert Hobgood, who presided over the case, seemed especially interested in the testimony of Green Party member Gray Newman, who along with Libertarian Dave Gable, was elected to the nonpartisan Mecklenburg

County Soil and Water District Board of Supervisors in 2002. When Newman spoke of the difficulties of wanting to run for the partisan office of County Commissioner, Hobgood expressed concern that in order to run under one's own party banner in one local district, it required that a party achieve statewide ballot access.

Mike Munger, Chair of the Duke University Political Science Department and the Libertarian candidate for Governor, testified that this scheme "leaves us showing up at the starting line for a marathon already out of breath." Munger said on the stand that while he has been actively running for two years, all his fundraising efforts have gone into the petitioning drive, leaving him with less than \$4,000 to start the general election campaign.

State attorneys argued that the state legislature had the authority to set any type of ballot access restrictions--though never presenting witnesses or evidence beyond the depositions of the Director and Deputy Director of the State Board of Elections. While state officials did their best to defend the laws in their depositions, even SBOE Director Gary Bartlett admitted in his that deposition that the barriers for ballot access in this state are at least double of what he considered to be fair.

Attorneys for the State also raised the specter of "ballot clutter" and potential voter confusion by allowing the voters too many choices. As before, the State failed to provide any evidence of this phenomenon.

Upon Hobgood's decision, LPNC officials predict the outcome to be almost immediately appealed to the NC State Court of Appeals. While the process could take another year, going into to appellate stage with a victory in hand will put the LPNC in a very strong position. "The legislature goes into session again this month," said Haugh, "and if we can wave a positive ruling in their faces that just might finally motivate them to change the standards to a level where any statewide grassroots party can run candidates in NC."

For more information on the case or to assist in the LPNC's ballot access efforts, please visit <http://lpnc.org/>.

Liberty Lessons from a Kurdish Expatriate

by Austin Petersen
National Volunteer Coordinator for the Libertarian Party

Last week, the chair of the Kurdistan Independence Party visited the office and shed an incredible light on the current political situation for Kurds in Iran. It is very interesting to hear alternative viewpoints firsthand from citizens of the world who do not often have strong voices in our national dialogue.

I know little about their situation, but the fact that I understood the Kurds oppression under Saddam in Iraq was more than most I gathered. Aref Ahmadi was an expatriate from Iran now living in Norway. They represented a group in Iran that they called “liberals,” and explained that there was no one in Iran who represented them. They have Islamic fundamentalists, communists and socialists, but no one who embodied their more modern, secular governmental views. Liberal to them meant “open” and freethinking, as in the classical sense of the word.

After a casual conversation about their homeland, I inquired as to how we could help them. Ahmadi scrawled “White House,” and looked up at me expectantly. I began laughing not because of the language barrier, but because of our inability to communicate with the White House despite even being citizens of the United States. I sadly explained to Ahmadi and his translator that we were unable to connect them with useful legislators due to the fact that we also have no representation in our government.

Chatting with these two gentlemen was an exercise in politeness and good will. I felt humbled that this man would come seeking us out specifically as torchbearers of liberty, such as our logo illustrates.

It was ironic to me that this man fled his country because fundamentalists, communists and socialists, control his government, in order to seek help from a country whose leadership is also overrun by fundamentalists, communists and socialists. One of the most striking things about the Kurdistan man was that you realize that he was willing to risk his life for an idea. He was not only a man of principle, but also a man of action, and his struggles are monumentally difficult--fighting as he is against a theocratic government.

Equal representation of our thoughts and ideas in our government would mean equal representation and ballot access. Is it really too much to ask for a third party to be heard from in a country whose claim to fame was freedom and equality among all people? Ballot Access is our first step in demanding our right



to be heard, and we still have a long way to go. We are on track in some states and behind in others. Virginia needs help, as does Connecticut, South Dakota, Illinois and Massachusetts.

The past two months that I have been your volunteer coordinator, I have heard lofty rhetoric about our principles. I have seen bitter arguments against one another on issues with little relevance to the current public zeitgeist, and those who speak convincingly of their devotion to the party. However, what I have not seen is my inbox filling up with volunteer requests on a daily basis from them.

In two weeks, we will have a Libertarian presidential candidate. Depending on whom that person is, we have the potential to enact a huge paradigm shift towards our views this year. That will only happen if people are able to match their change of opinions with a vote for someone at the ballot box in their state.

Of those who signed the Declaration of Independence, five were captured by the British as traitors and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons serving in the Revolutionary Army. Another had two sons captured. Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or hardships of the Revolutionary War.

Will you honor their sacrifice for you and your family by spending at least a day gathering signatures?

Join me in the fight for equality. Ballot Access is my number one goal, and I can only do it with you fighting alongside me.

An Intern's Experience at LP Headquarters

by Jake Ellis

Intern at the Libertarian National Committee

My internship at the Libertarian Party has been a fun and interesting experience. I've gone to the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), acted in a video to support ballot access, tried to convince my fellow Libertarians to run for political office and met a lot of Libertarian Party members indirectly through preparing your membership cards. When many others in my class were heading towards different Republicans and Democrats Representatives and Senators on Capitol Hill, I stayed with my principles and asked to intern for the Libertarian Party.

It brings me a lot of pride, and gives me a sense of accomplishment, to help a party that stands for liberty and freedom at a time when government is infringing on more and more of our rights. I became friends with most people in the office including: Robert Kraus, director of operations; Louise Calise, director of marketing and fundraising; Andrew Davis, national media coordinator; Austin Petersen, national volunteer coordinator; and the other interns who occasionally work here.

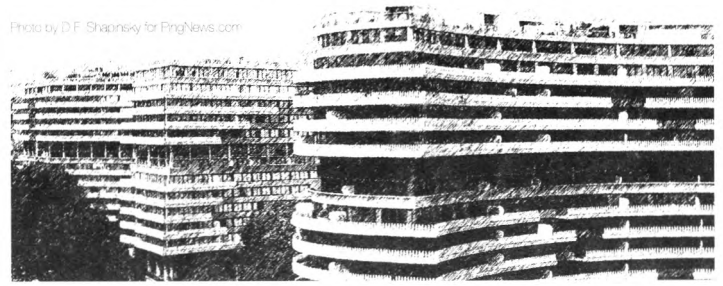
The second day I interned, I was told to meet at CPAC. It was interesting to see all the groups represented there. Of course, I was helping people take the World's Smallest Political Quiz. We had our fair share of libertarian-oriented people that day. I got to see several speakers, including Ron Paul who, I must say, is an inspiration in a time of political fatigue and close-mindedness. I bought a couple souvenir buttons and awaited my next day of internship.

Of course, not all interning is going to prestigious meetings and conventions. There has been a good amount of paperwork including organizing and filing papers in ridiculously large stacks. I have gotten to meet some of you indirectly through putting together your membership cards. It has always been a pleasure to see so many people renew or take their vows to protect liberty. After adding stickers, putting out contact information and gluing the letters shut, it was often left to me to run down to the post office and make sure everything went smoothly. Every time I thought I was finished, there was always another stack of cards waiting to be organized and mailed!

Wow, the Party must be growing!

I've also tried my hands at convincing fellow members to run for office. The vast majority of those contacted responded with a polite, "no." This varied from the standard "no thanks," a short summary of your

Photo by D.F. Shepansky for PingNews.com



life story, insidious and obvious lies about your lack of time, to "I just don't give a crap."

I guess I have to work on my persuading skills. Some of you did join, and I would like to congratulate everyone who decided to run for any level of office, win or lose. Austin, the national volunteer coordinator, has involved me in some of his video messages. Luckily, I'm a decent actor. I have done a video to promote Illinois ballot access. The video should still be on You Tube. My class had a good chuckle at my expense.

I've been at the Libertarian Party for some pretty important events, too. Gravel joined the LP to run for our presidential nomination, and it looks like Barr is doing the same. It seems as though our libertarian principles are more mainstream than the Republicans and the Democrats would have you believe.

It is exciting to be at the headquarters of a political party. I've gotten to overhear conversations between our staff and Libertarian state leaders, members of different newspapers and several of our potential presidential nominees. There have also been several hilarious office jokes about recent political news and some of our potential presidential candidates.

It is an exciting time to be active in the Libertarian Party. The Libertarian Party National Convention in Denver is right around the corner and this seems like the best presidential election cycle yet, with Ron Paul's run for the White House causing a lot of buzz in libertarian and non-libertarian circles.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve for the cause of liberty.

Welcome to the Liberty Pledge Club!

Thank you for your generous contributions

Mario Alves

Dann Amezcua

Perry Brandt

Wanda Corrales-Madrid

Barbara Gordon

Michael Hurley

Kenneth Ikeda

Guy McLendon

Emerson Olin

James Redmond

Scott Spencer

Lacy Taylor

Allan Wallace

Norman Wright

This Month in the Media

by Andrew Davis
National Media Coordinator for the Libertarian Party

Reduce, reuse and recycle government

April 22 - One of the hottest (pun intended) issues in politics currently is environmentalism and global warming. Unfortunately, a commercial starring Newt Gingrich and Nancy Pelosi indicate that Republicans and Democrats have taken a joint position in the fight of global warming. This, of course, is bad news for everybody else.

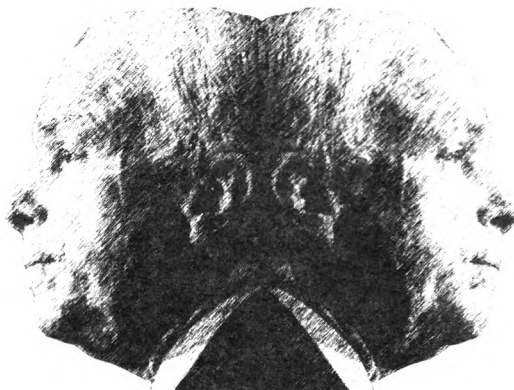


Marking the celebration of this year's Earth Day, the Libertarian Party released a statement by [former] Executive Director of the Libertarian Party Shane Cory, which called for a reducing the size of government as the first step towards solving environmental problems. "The best way to 'go green' is fixing environmental problems at their source, and that source is government," Cory said. "By reducing the size of government and recycling redundant and unnecessary government bureaucracies, we will shrink the size of our 'government footprint,' and in turn, help our environment."

Government has shown an inability to control most any problems facing American, and often their intervention makes matters worse. Global warming is not different.

Sen. Janus McCain

May 1 - Politicians are no strangers to double-speak, so it came as no surprise when Arizona Senator and GOP



presidential hopeful John McCain came under fire for a lack of clarity in plans for how he would pay for all

his proposed tax cuts. While of course the Libertarian Party welcomes a reduction in taxes imposed on Americans where it can, fiscal responsibility requires that tax cuts do not go without offsetting reductions in government spending. However, in this department, John McCain remains relatively silent.

In a statement released at the beginning of the month, Libertarian Party National Chairman William Redpath stated that "calling for tax cuts without any plans to offset those cuts with reductions in government spending is bad economic policy." Redpath also stated that deficit spending "has put us in the dire economic situation Americans currently face."

"If McCain fails to illuminate any other plans to reduce the size of government aside from stopping earmarks," says Redpath, "he'll prove himself to be just another 'borrow-and-spend' Republican, making him no better than his Democratic rivals."

Eight years of the Bush administration will have put America in some of the darkest economic times the nation has seen in decades. With the dollar's value bottoming out and a sky-rocketing national debt, Americans are begging for a candidate who is willing to address the issue of government spending rather than just promising more tax cuts. John McCain has yet to prove he is that candidate, and if he follows in his Party's footsteps, taxpayers shouldn't hold their breath.

Keep the housing market a free market



May 9 - In a statement released by Andrew Davis, the national media coordinator for the Libertarian Party, the Party called for more a move to make the housing market more a free market, where buyers and lenders ac-

cepted responsibility for the decisions they make.

"No person should be asked to pay for his neighbor's foolish choice to take on a mortgage he couldn't afford, or for a lender that makes a risky loan," said Davis. "The housing market should be a free market, where everybody faces the responsibility for the decisions they make without hanging the taxpayer out to dry."

Bailouts proposed by leading Republican and Democratic candidates for the presidency prevent lenders and buyers from learning from their mistakes, and place the burden of responsibility on American taxpayers. The Libertarian Party believes that no person should have to take on their neighbor's mortgage as a second mortgage.