

LIBERTY PLEDGE

NEWSLETTER

Libertarian National Committee, Inc. • 1444 Duke St. • Alexandria, VA 22314 • Phone: (202) 333-0008 • Fax: (202) 333-0072
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Elected Libertarian auditor Matt Schutter wins accolades for standing up to his board

The Carbon County Independent Gazette had this to say about a recent Audit Board meeting in Penn Township, Pennsylvania where elected Libertarian Matt Schutter used his authority as chairman of the board to vacate a member whose appointment could not be confirmed as legal and to refuse unjustifiable pay to supervisors for work they did not perform:

Audit Board chairman Matt Schutter called the meeting to order the morning of January 30, and then the people were captivated.

Matt briefly explained why the two previously scheduled meetings did not meet state Sunshine Law requirements, and why they had to be postponed. The Sunshine requirements encompass the manner of meeting advertisements, also mandating that official meetings be held in a public area for all interested parties to witness.

The township failed to accomplish these simple tasks, despite requests, not once, but twice. Schutter's disgust with the lack of professionalism displayed by the township was evident but did not overcome his resolve.

According to former Penn Forest Township (PFT) employee Mary Ann Lewellyn, "The first two meetings were either invalid or illegal because they were either not advertised properly, not published in the newspaper, or the notice wasn't posted on the building."

But the third time was a charm, as Schutter finally called a 2015 meeting to order. Highlights of the meeting may be viewed on YouTube, along with the complete meeting video. Subscribe to the Gazette to gain access to the footage.

Schutter requested that Robert Sarafini, a purported member of the township audit board, vacate his seat. Schutter then explained why Sarafini's appointment by a PFT supervisor was invalid. Sarafini was clearly not pleased with the developments, and after refusing to move from his chair, sat in awe as Schutter conducted the meeting without his participation.

The next matter to be addressed concerned documentation pertaining to the resignation of an elected audit board member, paperwork which was in doubt. Without official notice, the seat is still deemed to be held by the elected individual.

Chair Schutter had checked with the election committee, and found no resignation filed. Concerned with the supervisors' intentions in appointing Sarafini, Schutter had no choice but to remove Sarafini until someone could

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produce proper authorization for his presence on the board.

Schutter demanded several times that the township supervisors "do their job" prior to getting paid. Several motions to pay supervisors were tabled. Until the board auditors could be assured the supervisors were properly performing their duties, the auditors were going to do theirs. The supervisors had approved a forensic study at one meeting and then tabled the study, consigning it to the abyss. Any citizen mentioning such an audit in subsequent meetings has been gavelled out by Supervisor Warren Reiner.

Schutter needed to figure out what the supervisors were going to do about the public outcry for the forensic audit. The supervisors, having a job to do, were not going to get paid by this audit board until they did it.

Checks and balances were officially restored by an elected official — Schutter — who read his responsibilities and honored his oath. Schutter executed the meeting with precision. A regular American, holding no special skills, he was proud to be elected and honored to do his job. He knew a room full of people and the muckrakers were going to be watching. His pride forced him to research all the aspects of the position. In doing so, Schutter found several discrepancies in the checks and balances of the system.

One such fact revealed how cronyism and nepotism

continued on page 3

Minimum Wage Laws: You Can't Fake Reality (Forever)

From a column published by Judge Jim Gray, 2012 Libertarian for vice president, in the *Los Angeles Daily Journal*:

Reality: Although government does perform some necessary services, like military and police protection and a judiciary to enforce our laws, and provides an infrastructure like highways and dams, that facilitates the production of wealth, it almost never creates wealth itself. Instead, government takes large amounts of resources away from people and businesses, keeps a big part for itself, and redistributes the rest. So increasing government spending does not spur economic growth – mostly it is the reverse.

Reality: Since almost all wealth is created by the private sector, the more jobs there are in the private sector, the more economic growth our country will realize.

Reality: Employers in the private sector will not hire new workers (or retain present ones) unless those workers cost less than the income they produce. Thus the old saying “You can't fake reality” is true, although I would add that you can't fake reality forever.

All of this means that if government imposes market artificialities upon employers – who are there to make a profit – they will do one of five things for their own health or even survival: try to work around or avoid the mandates; cut expenses, usually by reducing their labor force and often by replacing the workers with machines; increase their prices if they can still stay in business by doing so; move to locations that do not require those rules, if they can; or simply go out of business. This analysis applies to things like minimum wage laws, increased union wages, healthcare mandates and legions of intrusive and complicated government regulations.

Consider customer self-checkout stations now found in many retail stores, computerized robots in automobile assembly plants, and automatic crop-picking machines. All of these have been implemented to reduce those companies' labor expenses, because those labor costs were greater than using the machines. Yes, the workers who were fortunate enough to retain their jobs make more money, but the ones who are less productive lost their jobs completely.

Is this result heartless? Are these employers greedy? Those are the wrong questions to ask. The right question is: Is this reality? And the answer is yes it is – and that reality will not change.

My friend the late David Sills, who was the presiding justice of the Court of Appeal in Orange County, told a story a long time ago about what he had observed during his trip to the Soviet Union. He was staying in the best hotel in Moscow, where he noticed that a worker was assigned to vacuum the rug in the lobby. So that is what the worker did: Every morning he plugged in his vacuum cleaner, turned on the switch and vacuumed the rug.

Unfortunately, the vacuum cleaner had broken a long time before, and there were no spare parts. Nevertheless, the worker continued to do what he was assigned. Justice Sills forecast that no society that would tolerate such conduct could survive – and he was proved to be right. With so much interference in the marketplace by our government, in many ways we are headed in the same direction.

The most positive thing about laws such as those setting minimum wages is that they make government lawmakers feel better about themselves. But that should not be the case, because those laws penalize many of the very people the lawmakers are trying to help, who are mostly low-wage and unskilled workers.

If lawmakers cared about unskilled workers at the low end of productivity, they would repeal all minimum wage laws, and address their situation by other means. That would result in more workers being hired, thus giving more people an opportunity to get a job – particularly the younger ones who are entering the workforce for the first time. This would, in turn, give all of these workers an opportunity to learn and demonstrate the positive work ethic of showing up on time and being reliable and cheerful, as well as the pride of earning a paycheck. Then the reality for most of those workers who learn and display that work ethic would be that, with time, they would either be given a pay raise because they would bring more value to their employer, or they would find work at another company and be paid more according to their increased value.

There would also be another important result from this approach: Those workers would see firsthand how they could profit by furthering their education.

All of this would also benefit society because, for example, it would be more productive sociologically for society to have 100 people working at \$10 per hour, than having 65 people working at \$15 per hour. This would be particularly true in poor urban neighborhoods, where unemployment and the lack of opportunity are pervasive, which, in turn, foster increased crime and despair. And greater employment is the only realistic remedy for that problem.

Yes, there must be some government regulation of the marketplace, but those regulations should not be nearly as intrusive or complicated as they are now. Why? Because they add huge government bureaucracies and expenses without achieving their desired effect. And they never will until they more fully take into account economic realities. And you can't fake reality forever.

James P. Gray is a retired judge of the Orange County Superior Court, the author of “A Voter's Handbook: Effective Solutions to America's Problems” (The Forum Press, 2010) and the 2012 Libertarian candidate for vice president, along with New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson as the candidate for president.

Auditor Matt Schutter

continued from page 1

permeated the system. If no one stands up to be elected or if someone resigns, the checks and balance are lost. The supervisors can select whomever they wish. This invites the risk that the auditor will pay the supervisors almost whatever they wish.

Schutter's research also revealed how the supervisors were requesting pay greater than that allowed by law. Rather than rubber-stamping the mistake, as has been done in the past in Penn Forest and in other townships,

Schutter chose to take his responsibilities seriously. He was elected to represent the taxpayer, and he was determined to represent him. No finer an American than one that steps up to protect this land, and acts in the best interests of the people. Schutter worked diligently for the benefit of the citizens of Penn Forest. He was obviously new to the seat, new to leadership, but he exhibited a tremendous degree of character that saw him through.

Even when challenged, he stood his ground. He was prepared with the research as his armor and his strong

moral character as his weapon. The video the muckrakers placed online will become a beacon for others to follow.

Was it because Schutter is a Libertarian? Was being surrounded by so many friends the support he needed to make history? You judge, but his actions offer a guide to follow, all the same.

The three basic standards by which we should judge any elected official were displayed by this board. The board tabled any motion unsupported by enough information to enable a sound decision. Secondly, they acted in the best interest of the people who elected them. Thirdly, the board acted as a good steward of the people's money.

When they decided not pay anyone until the job was performed to the satisfaction of the people, the room shook . . . corruption crumbled, and the mission of the muckrakers was revealed.

In discussions that followed, Schutter revealed that he is running for Carbon County sheriff in 2015. A strong character, a firm moral standing, and the willingness to go toe-to-toe will make him a formidable candidate for the position.

New and renewing Liberty Pledgers

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Manhattan LP sends check for \$.04 to disgraced politician

The Manhattan Libertarian Party held its convention on January 24, and raised four cents for the legal defense for New York state Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, who had been recently arrested by the FBI on corruption charges.

“It seems that most of our members believed that Silver, in his two decades as Speaker, had already extracted more than enough tax money out of them,” said Manhattan

LP Chair Brian Waddell. “If anything, they wanted to contribute to a legal offense fund to go after Silver’s partners in crime, Governor Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill DeBlasio, who, along with dozens of Democrats in the Assembly, continue to defend Silver publicly.”

Below is the letter sent to Silver with a check for \$.04 by Manhattan LP Secretary/Treasurer Mark Axinn, who also serves as Chair of the Libertarian Party of New York:

Manhattan Libertarian Party

February 12, 2015

Honorable Sheldon Silver
Member of the Assembly
State of New York
250 Broadway, Suite 2307
New York, New York 10007

Legal Defense Fund


Dear Assemblyman Silver:

I am the Secretary-Treasurer of the Manhattan Libertarian Party.

I am delighted to inform you that at our Convention last month a separate donation was established for the Shelly Silver Legal Defense Fund. (A photograph of the collection notice is enclosed.) Unfortunately, the total donations were only four (\$.04) cents, which no doubt is significantly less than what you usually take from New York taxpayers.

Nevertheless, we want to make certain that you know that Libertarians honor their commitments. Therefore we are delighted to enclose our check no. 1001 to your order in the aggregate total of four (\$.04) cents.

Very truly yours,



Mark N. Axinn, Secretary-Treasurer
Manhattan Libertarian Party