

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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LIBERTARIAN LEGAL ACTION . . .

Chicago LP files buy-back lawsuit

In a surprising legal turnaround, a Libertarian in Illinois has sued a local sheriff for sponsoring a gun buy-back program — arguing that it violates federal firearms laws.

On September 16, **Matt Beauchamp**, chairman of the Chicago LP, filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court accusing Cook County Sheriff Michael F. Sheahan of illegal gun trafficking as part of the so-called Safe Streets/Safe Schools 2000 gun buy-back program.

Specifically, the lawsuit charges that Sheahan is purchasing firearms without the required federal firearms license. It also claims the sheriff is violating the law by accepting weapons without asking for identification — which makes it easy for felons to sell stolen guns.

“The days of politicians posturing about gun control as a way to cover up their own failings in law enforcement — and subsequently failing to reduce violence in society — are over,” said Beauchamp about his lawsuit. “Felons should not be remunerated by illegal gun buy-backs, sponsored by politicians.”

Beauchamp also charged that gun buy-back programs do not reduce crime, but may actually give money to criminals to upgrade their weapons.

The lawsuit seeks a court order to halt the three-week-old buy-back program, which has already collected over 3,000 weapons —

including an AK-47 assault rifle and an Uzi submachine gun — in exchange for \$50 in cash or \$75 gift certificates per gun.

The lawsuit won the support of Concealed Carry, Inc., a non-partisan organization that lobbies for the right to carry concealed weapons.

“Gun buy-back programs cost the citizens of Cook County thousands of dollars, do not reduce crime, and only give to those selling junk guns the cash they need to buy a real gun,” said John Birch [no relation to the conservative political organization of the same name], founder of Concealed Carry, Inc. “The sheriff’s gun buy-back is good politics, but bad public policy.”

Florida talk show host becomes LP member

The Libertarian Party’s influence on talk radio has increased slightly, thanks to another radio talk show host who has joined the party.



Kim Watson — the popular host of “Hotline” and “PM Tallahassee” on WTAL (AM 1450) in Tallahassee, FL — announced on the air in mid-July that she had officially become a Libertarian.

“We are gratified to have Kim on board,” said Gene Cole, Leon County LP Chair. “She will be an asset to the party.”

Washington state mayor joins LP

A mayor in a small town in Washington state has joined the Libertarian Party — becoming the latest Republican to “defect” to the LP.

On August 26, **Andrew F. Leckie**, mayor of Spray, Oregon, officially joined the LP and changed his registration to Libertarian.

“He switched because of the all-talk/do-nothing attitude of the Republican Party,” said Oregon LP activist **Jerome Cole**, who was present when Leckie joined, along with past State Chair **Richard Burke**. “He wanted to be a member of a party that actually represented his beliefs.”

Leckie’s decision was encouraged by his wife, who also joined the LP, but was met by ambivalence from other politicians in Spray, who “were supportive but urged caution,” said Cole.

Now that he’s a Libertarian, Leckie’s on-the-job behavior won’t change much, predicted Cole.

“He was already a libertarian before he joined the party,” he said. “So in terms of governance, there won’t be much that he does differently — if anything at all. However, he says he will actively lobby the legislature to repeal [Oregon’s] onerous land use regulations and to protect Second Amendment rights.”

The truth sets us free

Ever since I discovered libertarianism 30 years ago, friends ask why libertarians have such radical views.

After all, we propose abolishing, not just reforming, public schools, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, drug laws, gun control, the IRS and the federal income tax.

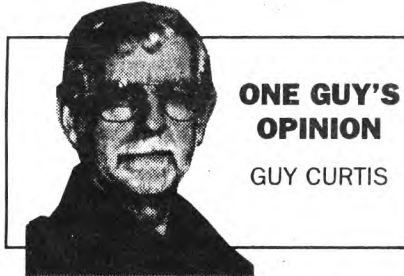
Folks point out to me, "Maybe our mixed system of 'free-enterprise' and socialism needs reforming, but it's better than anarchy."

So what are we talking about? I've heard "socialism" facetiously (but somewhat accurately) defined as follows: "You have two cows. The government takes the cows but makes you take care of them. The government gives you as much milk as it thinks you need."

You may want to contrast that with capitalism: "You have two cows. You sell one and buy a bull."

Well, a trip to a pure socialist country might awaken Americans as to what the difference is between capitalism and socialism.

I have a friend (libertarian) who recently visited Cuba to study the socialist way of life and make a presentation of libertarian principles to a research group at the University of Havana. I think everyone would agree that Cuba ranks among the top five models of pure socialism today.



ONE GUY'S OPINION

GUY CURTIS

My friend, Jacob (Bumper) Hornberger, told me that what you would find in Cuba would be much of what Democrats and Republicans have plastered onto Americans for the last half-century in the name of "saving" our free-enterprise system.

Even though it's illegal in Cuba to criticize Cuba's socialist system, Bumper was determined to present some libertarian principles in this socialist "paradise."

The way he did it safely was to challenge the core elements of Cuban socialism by drawing a picture for them of American socialism. This is what he said:

"In the US, the state runs our educational system, and it's a disaster. We libertarians challenge the state by asking: Why not let the free market provide schooling?"

"The state also runs a health-care system for the poor and the elderly called Medicare and Medicaid and an old age retirement system called Social

Security. They are bankrupt messes. We libertarians challenge the state by asking: Why shouldn't people be free to keep everything they earn and manage their own health care and retirement?"

"Our government wages a vicious war against drugs that is tearing apart the fabric of our society. Again, we ask: Why shouldn't people be free to live their lives the way they choose, so long as their conduct is peaceful?"

"Our government wages a brutal war on immigrants along our southern border. We libertarians challenge the state by asking: Why shouldn't people be free to cross borders to seek a better way of life, to start their own businesses or work for others, and to accumulate wealth and decide what to do with it?"

Goethe once pointed out that none are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe that they are free. The Cubans have suffered through decades of socialism, but at least they realize what socialism is. I'm not sure that WE do.

Who is freer — those who know the truth or those who do not?

Guy Curtis is a country lawyer from Imperial. E-mail him at: guyc@chase3000.com

▲ *The North Platte Telegraph*, North Platte, Nebraska, August 11, 1999

▼ *The Juneau Empire*, Juneau, Alaska, August 31, 1999

Libertarian party once again gains official status

By SVEND HOLST

THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

After a 13-year hiatus, the Alaska Libertarian Party is again a state-recognized political group.

Enough voters identified themselves as Libertarians when they registered to vote for the party to regain its lost status. As officially recognized, the party will be easier for potential voters to pick when they register, and Libertarian candidates can get on ballots under the party name with just a declaration and a filing fee.

Without the recognized status, candidates had to gather petitions before earning a spot on the ballot.

"In a nutshell, it's a lot less work," said Len Karpinski, chairman of the party. "We have to jump through less hoops."

He said the status also lends credibility to the party in the eyes of the electorate.

"There's an attitude of 'Who are you?' if you're not even on the ballot," Karpinski said from Anchorage. "We can compete with the big boys now."

The state Division of Elections will add the party's name to voter registration forms, said Barb Whiting, election coordinator. Before being recognized, the Libertarian name had to be written in as a choice.

The Libertarian Party had a presence in the state in the early to mid 1980s, running candidates for governor and electing a candidate to the Legislature. But it lost its recognized status in 1986 and its limited status in 1996, Whiting said.

There are two ways to get recognized status, Whiting said. One is for a party's gubernatorial candidate to win 3 percent of the statewide vote. The other, the route taken by the Libertarians, is for 3 percent of the number of Alaskans to cast ballots during the last gubernatorial election — in this case 227,156 — to register as members of a party.

Of the 446,245 registered voters in the state, 6,644 were signed up as Libertarians as of Aug. 4.

Libertarians see tax cut as mere flea bite

Leave it to the Libertarians to offer a novel spin on what to do with the anticipated huge federal surpluses.

To summarize the situation in Washington: The Republican-controlled Congress approved \$792 billion in tax cuts this week. President Clinton, a Democrat, has promised to veto the bill, saying that the annual surpluses should be used to make Social Security and Medicare solvent.

The Libertarian Party reaction is that both parties are wrong. The Republican tax cut is too small.

"The only thing smaller than this proposed tax cut is the Republicans' courage," said David Bergland, the Libertarian Party's national chairman. "Metaphorically, this GOP tax cut is a flea dancing on the back of the bloated elephant the federal budget has become."

Bergland encourages American taxpayers to "do the math." He said the Republican tax cut amounts to less than four pennies for every dollar the federal government collects.

▲ *The Telegram & Gazette*, Worcester, Massachusetts, August 7, 1999

► *The Times Herald*, Norristown, Pennsylvania, August 5, 1999

▼ *The Daily Oklahoman*, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 15, 1999

An Important Distinction

HATE crime hysteria is again in high dudgeon as President Clinton and the national media look for ways to capitalize on the latest high-profile crime.

The killing of a postal worker and the shooting at a Jewish community center in Los Angeles, allegedly by a man with ties to white supremacy groups, is the aegis for the latest round of teeth-gnashing. Frightening is the refrain that a wave of highly visible crimes justify restriction of constitutional rights.

We have long feared that emotional response to such crimes would cast a wide net over freedom. Certainly hate-filled crimes are deplorable. Perpetrators, if not already dead, deserve the ultimate punishment. What's worrisome is that true speech will be lumped together with violence as examples of hateful actions.

"The people who want to diminish our freedom will use the senseless shooting at the North Valley Jewish Community Center as an excuse to further restrict the Second Amendment; that goes without saying," said

Steve Dasbach, national director of the Libertarian Party. "But they won't stop there. The First Amendment could be next."

Perhaps this is hyperbole, given that courts and not Bill Clinton or Dan Rather ultimately decide First Amendment questions. But a chill is in the air. Clinton has always seized upon crimes committed by extremists for his political advantage. The national media enjoys a story with long legs. Dasbach believes a case can be made that sensational media coverage is itself responsible for stimulating "hate crimes." But that's not to say Libertarians want to restrict press freedom. Nor do we.

The First Amendment demands people be allowed to express their views no matter how offensive they may be to some. Only fools and leftists make the case that speech and gunfire are two sides of the same coin.

Freedom requires us to tolerate offensive speech. Justice requires us to punish hostile actions. Civility demands that we always distinguish between the two.

Libertarian sues over ballot spot

By Margaret Gibbons
Times Herald Staff

COURTHOUSE — Eagleville resident Kenneth Cavanaugh, the Libertarian candidate for Montgomery County commissioner, yesterday filed a lawsuit in Montgomery County Court to have his name placed on the November ballot.

It's unfair and a violation of his constitutional rights to require him to secure thousands more signatures than Republican and Democratic candidates need to get their names on the ballot, said the 43-year-old telecommunications consultant during an impromptu press conference at the courthouse yesterday.

"The state Constitution guarantees that 'elections shall be free and equal,'" said Cavanaugh. "All I'm looking for is a little equality."

State election law requires that a third party or independent candidate for a county office secure signatures on their nominating papers equal to 2 percent of the votes received by the top votegetter in the county in the prior general election.

The top votegetter in the county last November was Republican incumbent U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter, who received 139,956 votes. This means that Cavanaugh and any other third party candidate for county office, including Libertarian sheriff's candidate Ralph M. Gemi III of Towamencin, would have needed 2,799 signatures on their nominating petitions, according to county voter services Director Joseph R. Passarella.

On Monday, the last day third party candidates could file their nominating papers, Abington resident Kenneth Krawchuk, who chairs the state Libertarian Party's legal action committee, presented Cavanaugh's papers to Passarella.

With only 544 signatures on those papers, Krawchuk said he knew that the papers would be rejected for insufficient signatures. And Passarella did exactly that, rejecting the papers because the number of signatures fell short of the 2,799 required by law.

Noting that the GOP and Democratic commissioner candidates only needed 250 signatures on their nominating petitions to get their names on the spring primary election ballot, Krawchuk said it is unfair to require third party candidates to obtain so many more signatures.

"It's a bunch of monopolistic manure," said Krawchuk. "They are afraid of the competition."

"All we are looking for is equality and the right of the people to have viable choices among multiple political candidates," said Cavanaugh.

The lawsuit, which asks that a jury hear the case, is asking that the provision requiring third party candidates to have more signatures than Republican and Democratic candidates be declared unconstitutional and that Cavanaugh's name be put on the Nov. 2 ballot along with the names of GOP commissioner candidates Michael D. Marino and James R. Matthews and Democrats Ruth Damsker and Wendell W. Young III.

Krawchuk noted that a coalition of third parties previously attempted to have legislators change the law but were unsuccessful. Opponents claimed that reducing the signature requirements would lead to "cluttered" ballots, he said.

While this legal battle is pending, Cavanaugh said he will pursue his candidacy and, if unsuccessful in the courts, possibly switch to a write-in campaign.

His candidacy will center on a budget tax reform program that he will detail in the future, he said.

Other than meeting its constitutional obligations, such as maintaining roads and bridges and providing for the courts, the future of all other county programs, such as open space and parks and recreation, would be in the voters' hands, according to Cavanaugh.

Voters would select the programs they want to fund with their tax dollars and the others would be dropped. Public tax funding of even the programs selected by voters would be phased out over five years, with those programs then being funded with volunteer contributions from the public and private sectors or dropped, according to Cavanaugh.

Cavanaugh, in his first attempt for elected office, said he decided to run for commissioners because the other four candidates were not addressing tax reform.

Some liberal thinking on subject of deadbeat parents

We all agree: deadbeat parents—bad; tracking them down—good. Right?

Not necessarily, according to (hold onto your hats) the **Libertarian Party**.

The L.P.'s latest target is a federal tool to track down deadbeat dads and malingerers: the **National Financial Institution Data Match Program**.

Under the program, states are required to conduct quarterly matchings of deadbeat parent lists to accounts maintained by their local financial institutions.

Steve Dasbach, national director of all things Libertarian, issued a public service announcement last week saying that those politicians are using the law to violate "your financial privacy—even if you've never had children."

"In the name of catching a few guilty people, the privacy of millions of innocent people is violated," he states. "Only the government would claim it is protecting children by destroying their parents' privacy, seizing their bank accounts, and hauling them off to jail."

Is the cure worse than the disease? You decide. Dasbach claims the law has led to seized bank accounts of innocent people, the jailing of innocent people, and the attempted sale of bank databases to private companies. Nothing short of abolishing the law will suffice, he claims.

▲ *Boston Business Journal*, Bocton, Massachusetts, August 19, 1999

▶ *The Jackson Citizen-Patriot*, Jackson, Michigan, July 19, 1999

▼ *The Signal e3 Saugus Enterprise*, Valencia, California, August 5, 1999

Of eggs and warnings

Every once in awhile some unfortunate cracks an egg that is spoiled, then eats it undercooked. The result? Egg-straordinary fireworks that are most unpleasant to bear.

That infrequent happenstance is prompting the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to propose a new warning for egg cartons: "For your protection: Keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly."

The **Libertarian Party**, spotting an example of bureaucratic egg-cess, pointed out that Americans eat 67 billion eggs a year, and of these, only about one in 20,000 is spoiled. Those long odds brought counter-warnings from the party, including this gem: "Don't throw your eggs at bureaucrats who think Americans are too dumb to fry an egg."

That makes us wonder: What are likely to be Republican and Democratic positions on egg warnings? In the GOP, the big battle would be between economic conservatives, affirming that federal warnings violate free-market sovereignty, and social conservatives, insisting on a law making it a four-year felony to eat uncooked eggs.

Dems are more difficult to predict. Some might insist it is no business of the FDA what Americans do in the privacy of their kitchens. Others would happily authorize \$40 million for hiring inspectors to protect egg-norant Americans from illness.

As for the rest of us, may unspoiled Eggs Benedict be our portion now and forever. And by the hopelessly cracked head of Humpty Dumpty, let the yolk be on the FDA.

—The Jackson Citizen Patriot

Libertarians back effort to overturn weapons bill

BY MIKE FLENNIKEN
Signal Staff Writer

The **Libertarian Party** of California announced this week that it has thrown its support behind a San Francisco radio talk show host seeking to overturn the assault weapon-related legislation recently signed by Gov. Gray Davis.

Senate Bill 23, which Davis signed into law July 19, expands state laws that ban assault weapons by making it illegal to "manufacture, import into the state, keep or offer for sale, give, or lend any large-capacity magazine." The bill defines large-capacity magazines as any ammunition-feeding device that can hold a minimum of 10 rounds. The bill also bans a number of firearms based on their physical characteristics.

The "Veto the Governor" campaign was

started by San Francisco talk show host Geoff Metcalf, and must obtain 419,260 signatures from valid registered voters by Oct. 19 in order to qualify for the March 7, 2000 primary.

"The Libertarian Party of California is proud to support Geoff Metcalf's effort to remove this bad law from the books," said party state chair Mark Hinkle in a written statement. "This campaign may be unpopular with some, but it is the right thing to do, and Libertarians will work hard to make sure this question gets on the ballot."

The bill passed the Senate on July 12 by a 26-13 vote, one that largely followed party lines. Sen. William J. "Pete" Knight, R-Palmdale, opposed the measure.

Bruce Acker, the Libertarian candidate for U.S. Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon's 25th District Congressional seat in the November 2000 elections, acknowledged that the cam-

paign faces a tough challenge, and that "other than being on the recipient list of the petition, I will circulate it and get as many (signatures) as I can. It's certainly a grass roots effort. ...

"Anything that we can do to increase citizens' ability to protect themselves is the right thing to do," Acker said.

Chris Burns, Knight's legislative director, called SB 23 "unconstitutional" and "vague," explaining that, "The average person is going to have a hard time knowing which guns are illegal and which ones they need to turn in. ... I would venture to say that Pete Knight would be willing to sign the petition to overturn this."

According to statistics released by Secretary of State Bill Jones' office, this marks the 51st attempt at a referendum petition. Of the other 50, 39 have qualified and 25 were successful in preventing enactment of legislative statutes.