

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

Libertarian National Committee, Inc. ♦ 2600 Virginia Ave, NW, Suite 100
Washington DC 20037 ♦ Phone: (202) 333-0008 ♦ Fax: (202) 333-0072

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HR 2477 gets hearing and second co-sponsor

Congressman Ron Paul's ballot access reform bills made progress on two fronts over the past month — gaining another co-sponsor and getting a surprise hearing before a House committee.

Congressman Bill Redmond (R-NM) has become the second co-sponsor of HR 2477 and HR 2478, according to Richard Winger of *Ballot Access News*.

Redmond joins Steven LaTourette (R-OH) as a co-sponsor of the pair of bills that would make the election system "more democratic and responsive to the American people," according to Paul, a Republican Congressman from Texas who ran as the Libertarian Party's presidential candidate in 1988.

Adding to the bills' momentum, Paul was invited to testify before the House Oversight Committee on February 26 — the first time in at least a decade that a Congressional committee has considered any ballot access bill.

"The hearing was historic, since [a] ballot access bill has been in five different sessions of Congress, and this is the first time [any one of them] ever had a hearing," noted Winger.

In addition, the Libertarian Party's national director, Ron Crickenberger, attended the hearing and submitted written testimony to the committee.

A freedom issue

In his statement, Paul told the committee that campaign reform is "a freedom issue. And limiting freedom won't solve the problem. Unless we have a much smaller government that doesn't hand out favors, we won't have a solution."

Paul said he opposed any legislation that limits the ability of individuals to participate in campaigns — and argued that Congress should pass legislation that "expands the exchange of political ideas."

The way to do that, he said, was with HR 2477 (which reduces petitioning requirements for candidates for president, U.S. House, and U.S. Senate) and HR 2478 (which opens up presidential debates to include candidates qualified for the ballot in at least 40 states).

In his written testimony, Crickenberger reminded the committee that "the current system discriminates against third-party candidates simply because of their political beliefs. Voting and running for office are fundamental rights, and the government should treat every American equally, regardless of race, creed, sex — or political party."

The solution? HR 2477 and HR 2478, he said, which move "this nation toward greater participation in our democracy."

Roy Innis: No to governor's race, but "maybe" to NY mayor in 2001

Civil rights activist Roy Innis has decided not to run for governor in New York on the Libertarian Party ticket — but is indicating a "strong interest" in running for mayor of New York city in 2001, said LP State Chair Lloyd Wright.

Innis, the well-known African-American president of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), joined the Libertarian Party in January, and said he was considering a gubernatorial bid this year. State party leaders cheered him on, in hopes that an Innis campaign would generate the 50,000 votes needed for "major party" status.

However, citing CORE business and fundraising commitments, Innis decided in late February not to run.

"Mr. Innis and the CORE board stated repeatedly that they agreed with our principles, but just couldn't afford the time this year," said Wright. "While we are all disappointed that Roy declined to run, we are excited about his joining the party and believe he will help us greatly in the future."

That future could arrive in just three years, because Innis "indicated a strong interest in running for New York City mayor in 2001," said Wright.

Ex-mayor Carl Strang wins 10% in costly Florida state senate race

Outspent more than 15 to one, LP member Carl Strang nonetheless won 10% of the vote in a fiercely contested, partisan race for state senate in Florida.

Strang, a former mayor of Winter Haven, saw his \$49,000 campaign budget dwarfed by the \$763,000 spent by his Republican and Democratic opponents in the March 10 special election — but managed to "mobilize volunteers, bring new members to our party, and get thousands of people to vote Libertarian for the first time," said state party secretary Tom Regnier. "The Strang campaign clearly established the Libertarian Party as a factor in state politics."

Libertarian wins TX city council race

LP of Texas Vice Chair Bob Phipps overcame "relentless" attacks to win a seat on the Sour Lake City Council in a special election on January 18.

Phipps received 81% of the vote after forming a coalition with two non-Libertarians — an overwhelming victory that came despite being "attacked relentlessly by the opposition as a Libertarian who would 'dissolve the government,'" he said. Now, Phipps will become the eighth elected or appointed Libertarian in Texas once he takes office in May.

Bill would aid nursing employees

By John Lang

Scripps Howard News Service

WASHINGTON — Should federal employees get paid breast-milk breaks to feed their babies? Should breast-feeding be protected by civil rights law?

Check one of the following:

- Yes.
- No.
- Somebody burp Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.).

■ It's time to shut up those complaining Libertarian curmudgeons with a pacifier.

This is one of those proposals that spotlight the dyspeptic divide between those who believe government should fix social worries and those who think it ought to leave people alone.

"Politicians should let parents and employers devise their own family-friendly policies — and stop milking the taxpayer," says Libertarian Party chairman Steve Dasbach.

Says Maloney: "An employer must not make a tougher job of motherhood by preventing her from breast-feeding her child."

Maloney's bill, in addition to paid breaks for nursing mothers with federal jobs, would guarantee that working women in private industry get paid breast-milk breaks of up to an hour per day for a year following the birth of a child. It would ensure that breast-feeding is a protected activity under civil rights law.

The bill would encourage employers to set up private and sanitary environments for women to breast-feed or collect their milk, by providing tax credits to set up lactation sites, to buy or rent lactation pumps and to hire lactation consultants.

"I understand the difficulties of balancing work and the children," says Maloney. "I was the first member of the New York City Council to give birth while I held office."

Says Dasbach: "Taxpayer-funded breast-feeding is truly the mother of all political subsidies. Only Congress could take something as personal and intimate as breast-feeding and milk it for political gain."

Maloney makes these points:

■ At least half of the women employed when they get pregnant return to jobs by the time their infants are 3 months old.

■ The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breast-feeding for at least the first 12 months of a child's life. The Surgeon General agrees that breast-milk is the best form of nutrition for children during their first months.

■ Women who can breast-feed in places of employment have higher morale, higher self-esteem, increased productivity, more company loyalty and lower health care costs.

■ Children denied breast-feeding have higher rates of death, meningitis, childhood leukemia, diabetes, respiratory illness, diarrhea, allergies, obesity and earaches.

■ Companies such as Aetna, Blue Cross, Blue Shield and CNN provide nursing mothers with lactation rooms. Yet this is not the norm. As Maloney says, "It is amazing to me that given these facts, an employer would actually step in to prevent a woman from breast-feeding."

Minimum Wage Hike No Help

Now that the minimum wage has gone up to \$5.15 per hour, all those minimum-wage workers must have done a little better for the holidays, right? Unfortunately, probably not. They may temporarily benefit from the increase, but as the economy adjusts, they will find that they are no better off than they were before the increase.

Why? The reason is simple economics. Even though their wage has increased in dollar amount, their value to their employer hasn't increased. Congress is unable to pass legislation that would make them more productive. It's typical of Congress and many voters to think that everything has a political solution, but this certainly doesn't.

Since the companies with minimum-wage workers aren't receiving any additional benefits from the increase, they may try to cut expenses, raise their prices or put off hiring new people. If they have to make up the difference out of their "profits," then that will slow down or even stop the company's ability to expand, improve, innovate and generally to provide better, cheaper products and/or services to their customers.

Fortunately, the increase is not a disaster scenario. The jobs market already had driven the wages of most employees to well above the minimum wage, even in traditionally low-paying industries like fast food. The impact to the economy will be minimal, and thus, difficult to see.

Once the adjustment to the economy has been made, though, we will discover that \$5.15 in 1998 has about the same value that \$4.25 had in 1995. The wage increase will be in vain.

Some people will say that the increase wasn't enough, and will want us to go through the vicious economic cycle all over again. This would be a mistake. If raising the minimum wage actually worked, why not raise it to \$10? Or \$20? Or even \$100?

The government may mint coins and print paper currency, but it has little direct control over the value of money. You and I and everyone else in the economy decide the value of money by what we purchase, and what we don't purchase, and how much we're willing to spend on those purchases. It is a rather complex system but it is entirely voluntary, and it is an economic system, not a political system.

If you understand where "value" comes from, you have the key to understanding much about how the economy actually works, and why political solutions to the economy don't work. You would also understand that employees are not paid their wages out of basic human dignity, or because they need it to pay bills and feed the family. They are paid based upon the value of their skills to their employer.

The solution to helping low-wage earners becomes ridiculously obvious: increase their value to employers with improved or greater skills. Why should we be surprised to find that "flipping burgers" won't feed a family of four? Learn welding, computer programming, become a better salesperson, or better at managing other people. There are a variety of skills and a variety of ways to learn those skills to suit every temperament. Of course, low-wage earners can only be helped if they're willing to learn.

Legislating a political solution to an economic "problem" is absurd. It seems silly that libertarians have to point out the obvious, but then, consumer math courses in high school teach teens how to calculate a paycheck, but not the value of the paycheck.



POINT OF VIEW

Michael A. Clem

Michael A. Clem is state chairman of the Libertarian Party of Oklahoma.

MORE EVIDENCE FOR CONCEALED CARRY

A new study by the Cato Institute provides more ammunition for reforming concealed-carry laws in those states that make it difficult or impossible for honest citizens to obtain permits. The study found that in the 24 states with liberal concealed-carry laws, murders dropped by 7.7 percent, rapes by 5.2 percent, robberies by 2.2 percent and aggravated assaults by 7.7 percent. According to Libertarian Party National Chairman Steve Dasbach, who is working to get the results of the study out to the public, "There's blood in the streets" in those states that prevent concealed carry. "After accounting for all other factors, the study calculated that in 1992 alone, 1,414 more people were murdered than would have been if concealed-carry laws were in effect," Dasbach said.

Furthermore, the study found that an additional 4,177 people were raped, 11,898 more were robbed and 60,363 more assaulted as a result of increased criminal activity in states that disarm citizens.

"Denying terrified Americans the right to carry a gun is like putting them at the front of the line on Death Row," Dasbach said. "At the very least, politicians should have the decency to stop disarming America's most vulnerable citizens: crime victims." ❏

▲ (LEFT) *Daily Southtown*, Tinley Park, Illinois, February 13, 1998

▲ (ABOVE) *Tulsa World*, Tulsa, Oklahoma, January 11, 1998

◀ *Guns & Ammo*, Los Angeles, California, March 1998

Libertarian files to run for governor

Journal Staff Report

Entrepreneur Steve Kubby filed petitions in Auburn this week to be placed on the June primary ballot as a Libertarian candidate for governor.

The Squaw Valley-based publisher of "Alpine World" electronic magazine said he plans to offer voters a fresh alternative to politics as usual.

"I'm running because I'm fed up with bad government, corrupt politicians and arrogant officials," Kubby said. "Like you, I'd like the government to just leave me and my family alone, respect my personal property, and stop treating me like a child."

The 51-year-old founder of the former "Ski West" magazine is perhaps best known for his leading role in helping to pass Prop. 215, legalizing marijuana in California for medical use.

During his storied business career, he said he first launched "Ski West" magazine, now published as "Adventure Journal," on a shoestring budget.

His new high-tech venture, "Alpine World," an electronic environmental magazine, registers 8 million hits a month.

One of his main focuses, he said, is on improving education in

California.

"I will develop policies to increase competition and cultivate private sector participation so students and parents have more choices to get the best education."

Kubby has a bachelor's degree from California State University, Northridge and a teaching credential.

To combat crime and make California safer, he also has a plan.

"I guarantee that the Kubby plan to reduce violent crime is the only way to make California safer," he said. "With more than half our prison cells filled with non-violent drug offenders, the time has come to end this insane war on drugs to make room in our prisons for those criminals who commit acts of violence against the people."

Kubby said police work should be focused on violent crimes and crimes of fraud and theft, not "babysitting adults over personal choices that do not hurt anybody else."

Kubby's campaign web site is: <http://www.alpworld.com/kubby98>



Kubby

Q: I wasn't impressed by the Republican response to the president's State of the Union Message. Did the Libertarian Party, the nation's third-largest, have a response? If so, where can I read it or get a summary?

— James Harris, Rydal

A: The Libertarian Party response was released Wednesday. It wasn't televised. Those with Internet access can find it via the party's home page. Libertarian spokesman Bill Winter in Washington said party statements are issued in the form of news releases. As a general rule, they are posted on the home page within 24 hours, he added. So the Libertarian's State of the Union response wasn't available until Thursday. Winter said there's a sign-up option on the home page for people to request that Libertarian news releases be sent by e-mail directly to them. This is the home page address:

<http://www.lp.org>

▲ *The Atlanta Constitution*
Atlanta, Georgia, January 30, 1998

◀ *The Auburn Journal*
Auburn, California, February 7, 1998

▼ *The Patriot-News*
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, February 22, 1998

Libertarians tap man from Abington

State's third-largest party turns deaf ear to backers of the Constitutionalists' Luksik to skip giving nod

BY PETER L. DECOURSEY
OF THE PATRIOT-NEWS

The Libertarian Party yesterday ended weeks of speculation that it might not nominate a gubernatorial candidate by tapping Ken Krawchuk of Abington, Montgomery County.

The Libertarians, whose convention ends today at the Harrisburg Marriott in Swatara Twp., are the state's third-largest party, with about 20,000 members out of more than 7 million registered voters in the state.

Supporters of the Constitutional Party's chairwoman, Peg Luksik, who is nearly certain to be her party's gubernatorial nominee, had at-

tempted to persuade Libertarians not to nominate a gubernatorial candidate, to allow Luksik a clearer shot at Gov. Tom Ridge.

Luksik, an anti-abortion and education reform advocate, is the most successful Pennsylvania third-party candidate in 88 years. Addressing the Libertarian convention Friday night, she said that while state law prohibited parties from nominating the same candidates, the law does not prohibit them from endorsing another party's candidates.

After her speech, Luksik said she was unaware of any efforts to persuade Libertarians not to contest the governor's race. She said her speech had referred to past races and possible synergies in lower ballot races this year.

In order to qualify for minor party status in the state, each party must have a statewide candidate who receives at least 2 percent of the total vote for governor or senator. Krawchuk urged the 55 party



KRAWCHUK

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delegates to endorse a Libertarian Party member for other reasons.

"We are the party of the principle that your life is yours, your property is yours, and that you have the God-given, inalienable right to live your life as you see fit," Krawchuk said. "We should nominate someone who will get out our Libertarian message."

Krawchuk, a transportation en-

thusiast and computer programmer, has been active in the recent statewide debate over ballot access for third parties.

He says he agrees with party positions which would abolish the income tax and Social Security and legalize marijuana. Krawchuk also believes that private donations, not tax dollars, should pay for police services and the U.S. military.

In a political party where pony-tails easily outnumbered business suits, the surprise of the convention was the nomination of U.S. Senate nominee Jack Iannantuono, a Lehigh Valley financial planner, who has been active as a fund-raiser for Republicans and Libertarians.

The party also nominated Gary Shoemaker, 52, owner of a York metal products company, for the 19th Congressional District, currently represented by U.S. Rep. Bill Goodling, R-Seven Valleys, and Harold Haller of Butler County for lieutenant governor.

Another view

Fingerprinting not just for criminals any more

By Priscilla Falconi,

Thanks to Congress, 1998 may be the year that you will be fingerprinted — simply to renew your driver's license.

Five states — California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, and Texas — already require thumbprints as a condition for obtaining a driver's license.

And, many other state governments are likely to follow suit in 1998, because pilot programs authorized under the 1996 Defense Department Funding bill are starting to take effect.

"Americans should give a unanimous thumbs-down to this new law," said Steve Dasbach, Libertarian Party chairman. "If we don't, your next trip to the Department of Motor Vehicles may resemble arrest procedures from an NYPD Blue episode: You'll be photographed and fingerprinted for the 'crime' of wanting to drive your own car."

One possible danger of the new law: The federal government could collect the fingerprints and add them to the massive database at the FBI Fingerprint Center in West Virginia — which now processes 14 million fingerprint identification requests a year.

Congress already collects similar information to track deadbeat dads, prevent the hiring of illegal aliens, and other purposes.

"The government wants to fingerprint law-abiding citizens, just in case they commit a crime," Dasbach said. "But why not just require every American to post bail or hire an attorney in advance, just in case they commit a crime?"

"Politicians always find lofty motives, such as protecting children or fighting crime, to write more laws. But in the end it's ordinary Americans — not criminals — who pay the price."

The federal government's new pilot program pays state governments to create fingerprinted drivers licenses as

part of a nationwide experiment to test various types of tamper-proof "identity papers" for citizens.

Fortunately, the new fingerprint law is being vigorously opposed by a wide array of Americans, Dasbach said: Gun-rights groups are concerned about weapons confiscation; the ACLU warns that politicians will have "an irresistible temptation to use the data for government surveillance;" and some religious groups who equate putting their fingerprint on their drivers license as a "mark of the beast" prophesied in the book of Revelation.

"But you don't have to be a prophet to predict that the government will always demand just one more piece of information — and then one more, and one more," said Dasbach, who pointed out that originally, drivers licenses didn't even require photos.

Now many states require Social Security numbers as well.

"But why should we trust the same politicians who routinely misuse FBI and IRS files? Caving in to their latest demands will only whet their appetite for more," he said.

In fact, Dasbach pointed out that in order to crack down on illegal immigration, the government has also authorized pilot programs for a tamper-proof national ID card, complete with "biometric identifiers" such as voice analyzers and retina scanners to track every American as they enter and exit the borders from Canada and Mexico.

"One of the protections that we have against invasive government power is its inability to keep track of us in every single thing we do.

A driver's license that can serve as a national ID card, coupled with computerized databases, raises the frightening prospect of bureaucrats tracking us like products in a grocery store," he said.

Priscilla Falconi is chairwoman of the Libertarian Party of Placer County.

They've got a point

Sometimes Libertarians, who shun government intrusions, have a point.

The Libertarian Party notes the latest in regulatory silliness. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration soon will start requiring seatbelts, windshields, turn signals and rearview mirrors on golf carts.

The agency is reclassifying many golf carts as "low-speed vehicles."

▲ *The Duluth News-Tribune*
Duluth, Minnesota, January 15, 1998

◀ *The Auburn Journal*
Auburn, California, January 17, 1998

▼ *The Washington Times*
Washington, DC, March 4, 1998

Age of greed

As President Clinton urges Congress to transfer billions of dollars from working-class smokers into government coffers and lawyers' wallets, other government officials are taking aim at gun companies.

"Politicians are frustrated by their failure to reduce violent crime, so they're conspiring to commit a crime of their own — shaking down gun manufacturers for millions of dollars," said Steve Dasbach, the Libertarian Party's national chairman. "They want to extort money from honest companies to pay for the crimes of street thugs."

An anti-gun lawsuit — patterned after the lucrative lawsuit against tobacco companies — is now being considered by Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell, Miami Mayor Alex Penelas and Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer.

Their novel legal strategy: Blaming gun manufacturers for violent crime, on the grounds that guns are a "public nuisance" and that "rogue companies" are deliberately marketing guns to criminals. The lawsuit, if filed, would force gun makers to pay the costs of prosecuting criminals, paying overtime for police and paramedics — even cleaning up blood from crime scenes.