

LIBERTY PLEDGE

NEWSLETTER

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

December 2014

The 98 Percent of Americans Who Don't Vote Libertarian Spoil Elections for Everyone Else.

The major parties are the true problem.

By A. Barton Hinkle

From *Reason*

Published on November 12, 2014

For the past week election analyses have been, as the tired cliché puts it, thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks in Vallombrosa. Yet despite all the postmortems, one burning question remains: Who spoiled the Senate race in Virginia for Robert Sarvis?

Conventional wisdom maintains that Republicans tend to steal the most votes from Libertarian Party candidates. After all, Republicans usually talk a good game about economic freedom. GOP candidates routinely praise job-creating entrepreneurs, denounce the heavy burden of government regulation, and—like libertarians—contend economic growth does more to alleviate poverty than redistributing wealth does.

Come election time, the conservative effort to siphon the libertarian vote sometimes grows explicit. When Sarvis ran for governor of Virginia last year, some voices on the right tried to argue he was an imposter. The true libertarian in the race, they said, was Republican nominee Ken Cuccinelli.

“Sarvis a libertarian?” asked *National Review*. “Nope. The Virginia gubernatorial candidate is a social liberal.” (But a libe— oh, never mind.) The conservative Red State blog concurred, calling

Sarvis a “phony libertarian.” “Ken Cuccinelli’s policies show a strong libertarian streak,” argued a piece in the *Washington Examiner*. An item in *The Daily Caller* agreed, accusing libertarians of “running a sacrificial lamb candidate as a spoiler” who would help elect “a real crony capitalist,” Democrat Terry McAuliffe.

“It is now clear,” the piece continued, that “the majority of Robert Sarvis’ votes will come at the expense of Cuccinelli.”

As *National Review* would say: nope. According to exit polls, only 3 percent of self-described conservatives voted for Sarvis. By contrast, 7 percent of self-described liberals voted for him. If Sarvis had dropped out of the race, then McAuliffe would have won even bigger. On the other hand, if conservatives, especially those professing to care about libertarian values, had voted for Sarvis instead of Cuccinelli, then McAuliffe would have lost. Way to blow the election, guys!

Funny thing about those professing to care about libertarian values. This year the Republican candidate, Ed Gillespie, came from the more establishment wing of the GOP, and could not be mistaken for a libertarian even on a moonless night. This made Sarvis the undisputed libertarian in the race. Yet those conservatives who last year urged support for Cuccinelli because he was ostensibly the real libertarian did not, this year, urge support for Sarvis. You can’t help thinking their unctuous concern last year for the cause of pure libertarianism might not have been wholly sincere. (It is of course dismaying to contemplate the prospect that

continued on page 2

The war on Libertarians and independents

By Jason Scheurer

From *Breitbart.com*

Published on October 28, 2014

The U.S. electoral system is a farce. It is controlled with the same mastery with which Coke and Pepsi dominate the soda market. It is sold to the American public as if the free and open exchange of ideas is what’s inside, but the hidden ingredients are toxic to the body politic.

The story of Election 2014 will be how Libertarians (and some Independents) were, and will continue to be, a deciding factor in statewide elections despite the constant roadblocks. No longer polling at 1–2 percent, the jump to the 6–8 percent range looks to

rewrite the political playbook that campaign workers have used for generations.

The Republican and Democratic establishment (yes, establishment, in the singular) is well aware of this and are colluding to do everything in their power to quash this growing game changer. They may say they disagree on almost everything but they are 100 percent in agreement that no one other than themselves should ever be heard.

In the entire 2014 election cycle not a single high ranking Republican or Democrat took a principled stand and demanded inclusion of all eligible candidates on the debate stage. In states like Florida the legacy party candidates bickered about portable

fans rather than civil liberty violations.

The background for this insidious miscarriage of representative government was established back when Ross Perot ran for office in 1992. The panic that spread through the Establishment fostered a call for a new way to combat any upstart — even those who are billionaires — from gaining access to the political arena. The weapons of choice were restrictive ballot access laws and unrealistic debate requirements employed to thwart anyone without very deep pockets and a network of followers cultivated over many years.

The magic 15 percent threshold for inclusion in any presidential debate is

continued on page 4

The GOP's Limited Ability to Win Over Those Who Vote Libertarian

By Jim Geraghty

From *National Review*

Published on November 6, 2014

A Virginia Democrat laughs on the Washington Post op-ed page:

Robert Sarvis received 2.4 percent of the vote; without him (or another Libertarian of similar stature) on the ballot, most of those votes would likely have gone to Republican nominee Ed Gillespie. And Mr. Gillespie, not Democratic incumbent Mark Warner, would be smiling as the hairbreadth winner.

Third-party candidacies are often ego trips, pure and simple. But in races as close as this one has been, they can be consequential. It seems only fitting that we Democrats stop licking our bruises long enough to say thanks to Mr. Sarvis.

The “Libertarians, without a candidate of their own, would otherwise vote for Republicans” theory is not so sound, and it’s not a factor Republicans should base a strategy on.

Those willing to vote Libertarian — as opposed to those who describe themselves as libertarian or having some libertarian views — are usually deeply attached to policy positions that are still pretty unpopular to Republicans as a whole — oftentimes (though not always) a quasi-isolationist or outright isolationist foreign policy, drug legalization (often well beyond marijuana), and gay marriage. Many (but not all) Libertarians oppose restrictions on abortion, habitually offer long diatribes about the Federal Reserve and the Gold Standard, and in some quarters, an inability to discuss U.S. foreign policy regarding Israel without lapsing into conspiracy theories and uglier sentiments.

What’s more, a lot of self-identified Libertarians see their

policy differences with Republicans as key to their political identity; otherwise, they would be Republicans. To many Libertarians, the difference with Republicans is the point.

Nor is there much evidence that Libertarians fear that their vote will elect a Democrat. For all of the alleged or potential flaws of voters who choose Libertarian-party candidates, they’re usually not stupid. They know their guy is in the single digits in the polls. They’re not voting in order to vote for a winner, and hearing Republicans complain that the Libertarian cost them the victory doesn’t make them feel guilty or a sense of regret. They may feel a bit of vindication in that result.

For much of autumn, polls suggested that North Carolina Libertarian candidate Sean Haugh would win a margin that was greater than Kay Hagan’s margin over Republican Thom Tillis. As it turns out, Haugh’s 3.7 percent was greater than Tillis’s margin over Hagan.

Most recent Republican campaigns, from the Romney-Ryan ticket to Ed Gillespie, did not explicitly or vocally run on the positions that most irritate Libertarians — a “let’s invade everywhere” foreign policy, support for the war on drugs, opposition to gay marriage, or leading cheers for the Federal Reserve. For those who have chosen to vote Libertarian in recent cycles, it’s not enough for a Republican to merely be quiet about the topics where Libertarians and Republicans disagree or deemphasize those issues; the disagreement itself is a deal-breaker.

If Republicans really fear that Libertarians are going to cost them future elections, it may be simpler to get states to pass changes to election laws like the one in Georgia, requiring the winner to get more than 50 percent of the vote, and force voters to decide between the two major-party candidates in runoff elections.

Major parties spoil elections

continued from page 1

not everything in politics is always wholly sincere. But we must be grown-ups and admit the possibility, however remote.)

Democrats also compete for the libertarian vote. Like libertarians, they favor less military action abroad. They also talk a good game on social issues such as gay marriage, civil liberties, and the war on drugs. When he ran for president, Barack Obama was particularly emphatic on the need to restore those constitutional rights that had been eroded by the war on terror. Once in office, though, he became an enthusiastic supporter of the Patriot Act and other tools of the leviathan state.

Mark Warner seems to find this less troubling than some other Democrats do, just as he is untroubled by market

interventions such as the Export-Import Bank—for which he voiced support earlier this year. And because Gillespie was less strident on social issues than Cuccinelli—but also less forceful in support of economic freedom—Warner and Gillespie took votes from Sarvis in more equal measure. According to exit polls, Sarvis got 3 percent of the vote among self-described conservatives, 3 percent of the vote among self-described moderates, and 3 percent of the vote among self-described liberals.

On the other hand, while zero percent of self-identified Democrats voted for Sarvis, 3 percent of self-identified Republicans did. This has led to some of the same recrimination on the right as last year. While conceding Sarvis is “a serious, well-qualified guy,” for instance, Power Line—a prominent conservative blog—spoke for many when it accused him of

becoming “a professional spoiler.”

But a spoiler of what? A spoiler of GOP hopes, is the implication. The response to that is twofold. First, that premise is often wrong. And second: Even when it is right, so what?

The reason libertarians don’t vote for candidates from the two major parties is not because they suffer from a false consciousness that leads them to misapprehend their own political preferences. The reason they don’t vote for Republicans or Democrats is because—brace yourself now—they don’t want either Republicans or Democrats to win.

As far as libertarians are concerned, the 2 percent of Americans who vote libertarian don’t spoil an election. Rather, the 98 percent of Americans who don’t vote libertarian are the ones who spoil it for everyone else.

Libertarian Election Results 2014

By J. Wilson

Excerpted from *ALibertarianFuture.com*

Published on November 5, 2014

First of all, thank you to everyone that voted Libertarian this election! Libertarian election results as good as these don't come without a lot of hard work from volunteers, and a lot of commitment from voters. We've made several gains in a multitude of states thanks to your help. Most importantly though, thank you to all the Libertarian candidates that sacrificed their time and resources to further the cause of liberty.

Libertarian candidates may not have won very many elections this year, but we've had some high percentage victories. In some states, that means we'll get the ballot access we deserve for the next election. Guaranteed ballot access is important because it's time and money that we won't have to waste next time. Libertarians will be able to spend more time and money campaigning, and less time getting arbitrary signature counts.

These high percentage Libertarian election results also send a clear message to both of the two parties. Voting Libertarian tells them they won't receive our consent, and will have to work harder if they ever want our votes. If they don't, we're more than happy to keep voting Libertarian. These Libertarian election results show just how many Americans are fed up with the two party system and want a third major party.

Highlights from the Libertarian Election Results:

Top Voter Percentage: Randall Lord from Louisiana's 4th Congressional District with 26.56% (55,224 votes)

Runner Up: Lucas Overby from Florida's 13th Congressional District with 24.75% (55,273 votes)

Top Vote Total: Adrian Wyllie for Governor of Florida with 222,565 votes (3.75% of the vote)

Runner Up: Bill Wohlsifer for Attorney General of Florida with 168,946 votes (2.9% of the vote)

New and renewing Liberty Pledgers

Claude A. Atkins	Denise P. Kalm
Jody Baggett	Ronald Kanagy
William Bamler	Stephen P. Marting
Kevin Barr	Ed Mauss
Thomas W. Bassett	Mike Moreland
Doug Bencotter	Byron K. Nichols
Grady P. Blount	Jeremy Nikel
Donna Bobb	Adam Noey
Henry C. Boschen	Donald Oshields
Thomas J. Bowman	Harold Owens
Christopher M. Brookover	Allen Palmgren
Jaimes D. Brown	Robert Parrish
Alison Burgujian	Lacey Price
David Cardosi	Eric Rodriguez
Patrick Champa	Denise Sampson
Aaron M. Chandler	Lawrence K. Samuels
Marian L. Dalton	Steven Schoch
Lynden F. Davis	Leonard C. Schwartz
Joseph Doyle	Patrick-Andrew F. Shuey
Steve Fedorko	Gerri Songer
Bernhard Gaider	Richard Toohey
Lorenzo Gaztanaga	David Traynor
Larry Gerhardson	Jonathan Walker
Shawn Golder	Bernhard Wolf
Harold J. Gooch	Keith Wolford
David Grill	Dallas E. Wrege
Frank E. Groves	Stephanie Wuerffel
Dustin Ho-Gland	

I would like to make a one-time donation to the LP:

- \$5,000 \$100
 \$1,000 \$50
 \$500 \$25
 \$250 _____ Other

I would like to increase my monthly pledge to this level:

- \$2,500** **\$100**
 \$1,000 **\$50**
 \$500 **\$30**
 \$250 _____ **Other**
 (minimum \$10)

(Please make checks payable to **Libertarian Party**.)

Please bill my Visa MasterCard AmEx Discover

Card number: _____ Exp: _____

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Occupation*: _____

Employer*: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

* Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year. Political contributions are not tax deductible.

The war on Libertarians and independents *continued from page 1*

the establishment trump card. It was selected because it provides the illusion of fairness while effectively eliminating anyone but the Republicans and Democrats from holding office. It's important to note that before being included in the 1992 debates Ross Perot was polling at only 7 percent and would have been excluded under current requirements. His inclusion in the 1992 debates rocketed his numbers higher in the final election total to 18.91 percent, the largest debate-to-final election percentage gain in history. Somehow, when he ran again in 1996 this billionaire did not qualify to appear in the presidential debates, being denied access by means of the 15 percent rule. This malicious exclusion was by design, not by chance.

In response to the growing corruption, the League of Women Voters dropped its sponsorship of the presidential debates back in 1988, labeling them "a fraud on the American voter." Walter Cronkite referred to them as an "unconscionable fraud."

Unfortunately, the presidential debate model has been adopted by many states without any legal or legitimate public discussion. There has been no honest conversation about whom should be included in debates, whether high profile or not, reminiscent of the old joke likening Democracy to two wolves and a sheep trying to decide what to have for dinner.

Fast-forward to today and the shenanigans continue. In races like those in Kentucky, Florida, and Virginia debate guidelines were being rewritten and manipulated with the express intent of excluding legitimate and qualified candidates.

Take, for example, Rob Sarvis in Virginia. This Harvard and Cambridge graduate with an NYU law degree and married to a pediatrician did not qualify to have his message heard. After being excluded from the gubernatorial race debates in 2013 because he didn't poll an average of 10 percent, his 2014 U.S. Senate race faced an expanded polling hurdle to that magic 15 percent number. In other debates where there were no polling requirements at all he was never even invited.

The highly covered Kentucky Senate race, which had been receiving national attention, included a Libertarian. David Patterson, a second shift working police officer, sued to be included in the one official debate on public television. At a time when Ferguson, Missouri, was a policing hot spot with many minority voters, why have on stage a police officer who was advocating for the demilitarizing of local law enforcement?

Patterson's race saw the goal posts moved as the polling requirements went from being nonexistent, to 5 percent . . . to 10 percent. The judge who rejected his request for inclusion was none other than Greg Van Tatenhove, who "served as a legislative assistant for Senator McConnell prior to law school," a man McConnell hired and who was a part of McConnell's legislative staff. For Kentucky it appears the word "recuse" is not in their dictionary.

Adrian Wyllie, the Libertarian option for governor in Florida, ran into the same 15 percent hurdle and sued to be included in the Florida Press Association debate. In 2006 the requirement for inclusion was 7 percent. In 2014 — with the polls showing Wyllie just above 12 percent — it was curiously raised to 15 percent. Debates held by news organizations CNN and Telemundo refused to invite him.

Those following the Wyllie campaign closely saw a clear pattern of what could best be described as changing the rules in the middle of the game. Once one hurdle was crossed in the race another suddenly appeared in order to stifle the American ideal of open and

free speech that the press is supposed to uphold.

A growing segment of the American public is now waking up to the fact that they are being herded like sheep. Libertarians and third party Independents are filling the void left by many who are fed up with two-party politics.

Political races across the country will, for the foreseeable future, continue to be in play in ways that can't be as easily manipulated as in the past. After a certain point the dark pools of money and attack ads have little to no effect. The focus for Republicans and Democrats must then shift to how to peel votes away from the third man in the race.

Rather than admit defeat, the losing establishment party resorts to blaming the outsider for "stealing votes" that they felt they were entitled to rather than having to earn. This is the basis for the restrictive access laws. These laws serve to diminish choice and crush dissent, but are sold under the guise of maintaining order and vetting the proper individuals.

In three-way races factors like the issues being trumpeted become even more important, a dynamic which should only improve the overall quality of the political system . . . but what if that third person isn't covered by the media?

Most Americans would agree that more choice is better, but don't tell that to the Republicans and Democrats. In a country with over ten types of toilet paper, why is it so hard to accept that there are more than merely Left and Right solutions to life's problems? Any real discussion on topics like marijuana legalization, civil liberties abuses, the ending of all corporate subsidies, and following a non-interventionist foreign policy are traditionally replaced with character attacks and innuendo when only two candidates are vying for a seat. Is it any wonder that half the population chooses not to vote?

The drop-off in consumption of print and TV media is a testament to the loss of confidence in those outlets. Could that be because many of them have been co-opted and merged into a strange 1984-ish Ministry of Truth? They are willing co-conspirators in silencing broad-based discussions of important issues. Instead of expanding coverage and arguing for diverse views they simply reinforce the existing power structures.

Alternative Media's surge and the converging rise of non-establishment views on both the Left and the Right are playing out, despite the direct and indirect censorship. Polling agencies are in on it also by conducting skewed surveys that leave out candidates or restrict the responses to just A or B. Take the time to purview the collection of polls at Real Clear Politics and see firsthand how many races cited only two candidates when there were, in fact, three running. It's been said that a tree falling in the woods makes no sound, but a candidate running for office and not included in polls is also never heard.

Fair elections involve more than 95-year-old old black women in Mississippi without photo IDs. Fair elections are about the free flow of information and choices. Just as soda companies pay off the grocery stores for shelf space — and radio stations have been caught in payola scams — the major political parties are hard at work buying access and restricting electoral options. For those who doubt this, just ask Ralph Nader about his experience trying to get on the ballot for president after Gore lost to Bush.

The Monday-morning political quarterbackbacks will come to realize that the rise of Libertarians to national status is now all but inevitable. Just as digital media has just about replaced print, the forces of expanding choice and access are working in favor of anti-establishment candidates, despite the blatant censorship. The third party genie cannot be put back in the bottle.