

LIBERTY PLEDGE *newsletter*

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Serving for Liberty Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Owen

There are about two-hundred elected Libertarians across the country working to increase our freedom and decrease taxes. A recent example of an elected Libertarian saving his constituent's money is Mark Owen, Mayor Pro-Tem of the Owosso City Council in Michigan.

Mark has been a party member since 1991. He was motivated to enter politics when the Owosso municipal government heightened its encroachment on property rights. The local government had created a historical district. This may sound appealing, but in application it coerced property-owners within the district to follow regulations imposed by an unelected board. This offended Mark who empathized with the victims who had lost control of their property to the extent of not being able to buy new window panes of their choice. Mark knew such an over-bearing state necessitated a change and decided to run for city council as a Libertarian candidate.

Mark ran a successful campaign for Owosso City Council in 2001. He credits his victory to the execution of a "nuts and bolts campaign" that paid close attention to the details. Mark made sure that information and ballots were mailed to absentee voters on time, he acquired voter lists so that he could target Libertarian-minded voters, he went door to door talking with voters and enlisted local activists to help his campaign. He urges other Libertarian candidates to speak to voters about Libertarian issues they are interested in using values they can relate with, in his case it was the historic district issue and property rights.

As Mark says, "Don't just spend time on the internet writing blogs, that never got anyone elected." Libertarian candidates must be careful not to de-legitimize themselves or alienate a public already prejudiced to third parties by being too extreme or abstract.

Once in office Mark was able to implement pro-Libertarian changes. Mark got a bill on the agenda to revoke a property tax collection fee of 1%. Mark was insulted on principal of the notion that people must pay the government to be taxed, as most Americans would be. Thanks to Mark's efforts, the tax cut was successfully passed on June 4th, thus saving Owosso tax payers about \$40,000 a year.

Mark has also helped decrease taxes by making the Owosso city government more cost-effective. Mark fought to deflate the budget by cutting minor waste, including encouraging police officers to use less gas, restructuring the staff to reduce numbers and hiring a more business-oriented city manager. Negligible government inefficiency adds up to inexcusable tax dollar waste. Two years ago the Owosso city council had a \$400,000 debt. Mark insisted that the debt be cut in half and the goal was accomplished.

We thank Mark for contributing to an Owosso city government that better respects the liberty of its residents. He serves as an excellent example of what a motivated Libertarian, offended by inflated government, can do to become a victorious candidate in a position to increase freedom and decrease taxes in their community.

Discrimination Alive and Well in New Jersey

The free exchange of ideas is an essential requisite of a functioning democracy. Unfortunately, Libertarians know the political system is organized to perpetuate the two-party monopoly. Battles for ballot access are a continuous resource drain. Attempts at media attention for even the juiciest of stories are often futile. Yet the blatant third party discrimination in the name of fair elections evidenced by the new clean election act in New Jersey is particularly abominable.

The New Jersey state committee, Fair and Clean Elections, is testing publicly financed elections in three pilot districts, 14, 24 and 37, with district 14 the only toss-up election. The clean election act gives candidates who agree not to accept outside donations access to public funding. Republican and Democrat candidates who acquire 400 \$10 donations are eligible for \$50,000 in public funding, an amount that can increase with more donations to a \$534,000 maximum for 800 \$10 donations. The declared intention of the act is to fight special interest by limiting donation amounts and to make elections more fair by not allowing people with more money to have more influence over candidates.

Yet the hypocrisy is obvious. Though Republicans and Democrats are given \$50,000 for 400 \$10 donations, third party candidates are only eligible for \$25,000. An even grosser disparity is at the 800 \$10 donations level, **Republicans and Democrats can get \$534,000 in public funding and third party candidates only a maximum of \$50,000**, less than 10% of the money provided for Republicans and Democrats. Far from being "fair" or "clean," this act symbolizes the unequal treatment of third parties by the self-interested major parties.

Assemblywoman Greenstein defended the gap between major and third party funding by saying the money is for serious candidates. Why acquiring 800 \$10 donations is not sufficient evidence of a serious candidate is unclear. Greenstein must not think the people are capable of deciding for themselves who is a "serious candidate" but would rather trust those in power to make an objective



decision.

Nonetheless, the Libertarian candidates running for office in district 14 are serious.

Jason Scheurer and Ray Cragle are both running for state assembly in district 14 and have accepted the public funding option. As Libertarians they both oppose the concept of socialized elections, but as Jason said, "It's wrong, but this is the world we live in and if you want to change things you have to infiltrate the system first."

Jason is a private money manager running as the "common sense candidate." His platforms focus on a government that spends within its means. He expects to be able to raise the 400 donations necessary to get \$25,000. This amount of money would be very unusual for a Libertarian state assembly candidate. Jason intends to spend the money on advertising through radio and direct-mail. He believes that with \$25,000 he could substantially impact the election.

The New Jersey Libertarian Party under their new chair, Lou Jasikoff, has done a commendable job acquiring and coordinating candidates for their November 2007 election. Rather than focusing on their initial goal to attain a full slate of Libertarian candidates the party decided to concentrate on quality candidates. Mr. Jasikoff personally interviewed people interested in candidacy to assure that they would represent the party well. Arising from the party's efforts to attract candidates and verify credibility are respectable Libertarian candidates in every region.

The morality of publicly funded elections in its purest form is questionable, but for funding to be so drastically unequal between major and minor parties is unacceptable. The reality of American democracy is shameful. As Jason said, "The Republicans and Democrats want us to think we can choose between vanilla and chocolate, but that isn't a real choice and that's why the system is messed up." It is a difficult situation, but we can't give up on the country, so we must fight on to make the Libertarian Party a real choice for all Americans. We thank the New Jersey Libertarian Party and Jason for their rigorous efforts to further liberty.

To Be a Great Candidate

~Arin Sime~

The primary purpose of the Libertarian Party is to get Libertarians elected to office. To achieve this we depend on Libertarians like yourself volunteering themselves for candidacy. Running for office costs time and money, but it is a truly rewarding experience that gives candidates an opportunity to represent the party and positively influence their community. We value our candidates and want to do everything we can to help their campaigns.

Arin Sime is running for state senate in District 24 of Virginia. He is an exemplary candidate, currently number one on the LP Candidate Tracker which uses empirical evidence to rate the success of a campaign.

To be a strong candidate it is important that one is involved in their community. This helps one build a social network and win the respect of voters. Arin has done a wonderful job of this. He has been a leader against eminent domain in his area, co-founding viriniaproper-tyrights.org. Arin has also fought for property tax caps as webmaster for Virginians Over-Taxed on Residences. In addition, he is a member of the Virginia Independent Consumers and Farmers Association, Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce, Charlottesville Venture Group, Rivanna Rifle and Pistol Club and more. He has also served on local civic committees, been an assistant scout master and is involved with his church. These activities show voters that Arin truly cares about the community and will work to improve it.

It is important that Libertarian candidates meet voters face-to-face to show people who may be weary of third party candidates that they are a normal person. Arin has done a fantastic



Arin Sime

job of this, not only using traditional methods like going door to door, but with other creative means. For example Arin spoke to AP government classes and has organized a motorcycle "ride for small government" during which he will travel around his district with his supporters.

Arin also has mastered the details. He declared his candidacy early and has been effective at mobilizing volunteers to help his campaign. Furthermore, he has an informative website at www.arinsime.com, an essential tool for a serious campaign. The site provides updated news on his campaign and the opportunity to donate money.

Arin's efforts are paying off. He has generated substantial media and constitutes a threat to the Republican candidate. His campaign has also made the Republican candidates in his district have to answer Libertarian criticisms. The Libertarian Party is very proud to have Arin Sime representing us. We appreciate his extensive efforts and those of his supporters, they are all true champions of liberty.

Welcome to the Liberty Pledge Club!

Girish Altekar
Lawrence Cole
Andy Coonce
David Fuquay Jr.
Jeremy Jackson
Jeffrey James
Douglas Johnson
Brian Jones
John Jones
Christian Kraft
Brian McElligott
Don Schaefer
Anthony Sileo
F.K. Vudmaska
Keenan Winters

Thank you for your generous support!

LP Pledger Profile: Ben Lake

The Libertarian National Committee values each individual pledger for their indispensable dedication to the party. In continuation of our effort to express appreciation of our pledgers' generosity we would like to highlight one of you.

Ben Lake has recently decided to become a monthly pledger. Ben is a twenty-four year old native Texan, working as a web application designer. He was introduced to the Libertarian Party by friends in college, after which he attended a couple of local Libertarian Party meetings and critically analyzed the party options. He was careful to choose a party based upon his individually reasoned conception of right and wrong.

Ben decided to align with the Libertarian Party because it is the only party consistent in upholding his value of freedom. He respects the Libertarian Party for being a party of principle, saying "I personally act on principle in everything I do, everything." Ben supports the Libertarian Party for upholding individual liberty, he believes society should expect people "to make their own decisions and be responsible for their actions." Ben expressed frustration with the popular belief that people aren't "good enough" to be trusted with self-responsibility or voluntary charity. He argued that this problem is only exasperated by a big government, which fosters a

dependent people and disincentivizes private charity. Ben believes societal problems should be dealt with by the community, not government coercion.

Ben made the decision to become a monthly pledger because he vehemently believes in the mission of the Libertarian Party, but is unable to invest as much time in the movement as he would like to. He believes, "the best way I can help is to try and pay someone else a decent salary to fight for the LP full time." Ben also uses his individual skills as a web application designer to contribute to the Libertarian Party. He has helped local candidates create an online presence, an example of which is available online at matthewmoseley.org for Mr. Matthew Moseley's campaign to be a Texas State Representative. This is a great way to help our candidates because it is affordable and effective advertising.

Committed Libertarians like Ben Lake are plentiful all across America. They live their individual lives in liberty, with respect for the rights of others. We appreciate their embodiment of foundational American values. The fight against the two institutionalized parties is demanding, but with the help of individuals like Ben and yourself, we shall persevere. The liberty torch cannot be extinguished.

Decreasing Liberty Pledge Revenues

Monthly pledgers, like yourself, are the base and frame of the Libertarian Party, without which our monument to liberty would crumble. We depend on your dedicated support to enable us to keep working for liberty. The consistency of your loyal support is what the Libertarian Party budget hinges on. Unfortunately, pledges have been dangerously low this month.

Please, at this critical time, when Republicans and Democrats are destroying our freedom and prosperity, do not forget the Party of Principle. If you are able, increase your

monthly pledge and encourage your friends to contribute to the party. Please contact our Direct Marketing Manager, Louise Calise at louise.calise@lp.org, or call us at (202) 333-0008 if you are going to change your credit card or if the expiration date is near. It would also be appreciated if you could please call us back if we contact you about a complication in receiving your pledge. The Libertarian Party deeply appreciates all the vital support we receive from our monthly pledgers, thank you. You should be proud of your contribution for the furtherance of liberty.