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Liberty Pledge

NEWSLETTER

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LP's help requested by U.S. House committee

The Chairman of the powerful Congressional Committee on Government Reform and Oversight has asked the Libertarian Party to help the Republicans' efforts to downsize the federal government.

The LP was asked to suggest expert witnesses and provide publicity for a series of public hearings which will be held around the country to focus attention on ways to make the federal government "smaller, more responsible, and more fiscally accountable."

The request for assistance was made on June 28th by Congressman William Clinger (R-PA) at a Capitol Hill meeting. In attendance were organizations that have through their support behind the committee's efforts — including the National Taxpayer's Union, Citizens Against Government Waste, and the Business Roundtable.

"This is exciting," said LP Director of Communications Bill Winter. "It gives us an opportunity, however small, to encourage the Republicans to actually fulfill their promise to reduce the size of government."

The Committee's next scheduled public hearing will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina on July 28th. Winter said the National LP would try to notify state parties about hearings, and attempt to arrange for Libertarians in public office to attend the hearings as expert witnesses.

"We want the Libertarian perspective — the *true* voice of downsizing government — to be heard," he said.

CA Libertarians help defeat \$34 million school bond

Libertarians in Lake Elsinore, California, played a pivotal role in the defeat of a school bond in June — saving local taxpayers \$34 million.

Riverside County LP Vice Chair Gene Trospen organized a group called STOP (Stop Taxpayer Obligation Propositions) to fight the bond proposal. "While hitting the usual 'no more taxes' argument, STOP continually and effectively focused attention upon wasteful and needless projects," said Trospen.

The final vote was 55.5% against the bond. "Libertarians scored a major victory by successfully defeating [this] measure," said Trospen.

Harry Browne invited to CityVote TV debate

Harry Browne, a candidate for the Libertarian Party presidential nomination, has been invited to appear in the first televised presidential debate of the 1996 election season on October 8th — along with President Bill Clinton and Senator Robert Dole.

The invitation came from CityVote, which is conducting a nationwide presidential preferential primary in 18 cities around the country on November 7th, 1995.

The first televised debate will be held in Minneapolis-Saint Paul on Sunday, October 8th, and is scheduled to be broadcast by PBS and C-SPAN. A second debate is planned for October 22nd and a third for November 5th.

In all, 12 candidates qualified for the CityVote primary and debate, although there is no guarantee they will participate. Included are Republicans Dole, Phil Gramm, Lamar Alexander, Pat Buchanan, Bob Dornan, Alan Keyes, Richard Lugar, Arlen Specter and Pete Wilson. Democrats Clinton and Lyndon LaRouche also qualified. Browne was the only third party candidate to meet the criteria.

CityVote — which bills itself as "A National Urban Presidential Primary" — is a non-binding presidential preference poll, conducted in conjunction with local elections. Participating cities include Spokane, WA; St. Paul, MN; Baltimore, MD; Minneapolis, MN; Boston, MA; Tucson, AZ; and Boulder, CO. Other cities expressing interest include San Francisco, Houston, San Diego, and Cleveland.

"This is an exciting first for a Libertarian presidential candidate," said Browne campaign director Sharon Ayres.

Rothhaus back in office in NH

Former New Hampshire State Representative Finlay Rothhaus has been returned to office as a Selectman in his hometown of Merrimack. Rothhaus finished in first place for two open seats in the May 9th election, more than 700 votes in front of the incumbent.

"To be honest, I expected to win. But I didn't think it would be by such a large margin," said Rothhaus, who had been identified by local newspapers as a Libertarian in the non-partisan race.

Rothhaus switched to the LP as a seated GOP state legislator in 1992, was re-elected as a Libertarian later that year, but fell short in his re-election bid in 1994.

Libertarians, Perot Group Offer Voters 2-Party System Option

By DOUG CURTIS
Free Press Staff Writer

You say the two-party system's got you down?
Do you feel like your elected officials just don't listen, or worse, just don't care?

Well, join the crowd.

Scores of local residents have abandoned the Democratic and Republican parties, which they feel are too firmly ensconced in the political landscape, in favor of smaller, grassroots movements.

In Hamilton County, the Libertarian Party and Ross Perot's organization, United We Stand America, have each made considerable inroads in recent months.

Representatives of both groups credit the proliferation of talk radio and growing public dissatisfaction with the status quo for the surge in interest.

"The two major parties have colluded to the point you can no longer tell them apart," said Hamilton County Libertarian Vice Chairman Barry Simpson. "When they get together to pass laws you'd better watch out, because there's probably some back-room dealing going on. Democrats and Republicans are two peas in the socialist pod!"

Chairman Bill Cole said the county Libertarian Party currently has a mailing list of 200 people that includes nearly 50 card-carrying members. And he added that participation has increased with each monthly meeting.

"People want a choice," he said. "We do get some one-issue people. But predominantly, they are people who have figured out that government doesn't work as well as the free market does."

"The only difference between Democrats and Republicans is in their spending habits. Although both will spend us into debt, the Republicans will say, 'I'm sorry.'"

UWSA, on the other hand, is

more loosely organized and has not yet sought official party status.

Hamilton County Chapter President Dr. Frank King, a retired University of Mississippi professor in electrical engineering, said the group mostly provides information to the public and political candidates on a number of local and national issues.

But he also noted that there is talk of reorganizing into a third party when UWSA holds its annual convention in Dallas this August.

"UWSA was organized to furnish information to the citizens of the U.S. regarding the state of the union," Dr. King remarked. "Any political party is free to apply the information we can provide to help guide the policy-making process."

UWSA grew out of Mr. Perot's failed presidential bid as an independent candidate in 1992.

Dr. King said interest mushroomed last year after Congress ratified two international trade agreements despite widespread public opposition.

"The one-party concept was emphasized in the recent NAFTA and GATT/WTO legislation. It was estimated that 80 percent of the people were opposed to this legislation, yet both Democrat and Republican legislators colluded to pass the acts which are now producing catastrophic results, ..." he said.

Dr. King said UWSA simply wants to return to a representative government based on the principles of the Constitution, bypassing a system in which well-funded lobbyists and special interest groups set the political agenda.

The Libertarian Party — now the nation's third-largest political party — landed on the political scene in 1971, shortly after President Richard Nixon demonized

the dollar and imposed wage and price controls.

The party has since fielded presidential candidates in every national election and has seen 143 of its members elected to state and local offices across the country.

Libertarians believe in self-ownership — that the individual is the sole owner of his body and mind, as well as the fruits of his labor.

To that end, Libertarians say they advocate a reduction in the size of the federal government — which they consider too intrusive — and the cutting of all taxes.

And though they do not condone such acts as prostitution, illicit drug use and gambling, Libertarians feel the individual should make those decisions for himself.

Also on the Libertarian hit-list are the federal income tax, welfare, gun control and the Clinton crime package. But like the two major parties, Libertarians are locked in a major dispute over abortion.

If you're wondering why you've never seen Libertarian candidates listed on your Tennessee ballot, there's a good reason. State law denies ballot access to all third-party candidates.

"In Tennessee, anyone who is not a Democrat or Republican is listed as an Independent," Mr. Simpson observed. "At this point, we've got ballot access in 25 states in 1996, while other third parties now only have one state."

So in order to get a foot the door, both groups are turning their attention to local issues.

Dr. King said his phone "rang off the hook" earlier this year when the city of Chattanooga announced its intentions to annex parts of Middle Valley.

"People who never would have called us six months ago are getting in touch with us now," Dr.



Free Press photo by DOUG CURTIS

TAKING A STAND: Hamilton County Libertarian Party Chairman Bill Cole, left, and Vice Chairman, Barry Simpson, right, are not shy in voicing their dissatisfaction with the two-party system.

King grinned. "In Brainerd, we consulted with 7,000 people about there annexation problems and we submitted a document to the mayor and City Council. We met with about 28,000 people in Middle Valley. Basically we support their right to vote on the issue."

Dr. King bristled at suggestions that UWSA is little more than a group of angry, undereducated white males pinning their hopes and dreams on the populist billionaire Perot.

"Our membership here in Hamilton County is predominant-

ly white," he conceded. "But a lot of women are involved. And our members have educational backgrounds that go all the way from high school, college, graduate school, professional people and blue collar workers."

"We have the greatest mix you could get. I would suspect we have more Republicans than Democrats, but I don't know for sure since we don't ask. But I guarantee that if the mayor and City Council don't respond to us, they're going to have to deal with us individually because we will keep on knocking at their doors."

▲ Chattanooga Free Press, Chattanooga, Tennessee, June 11, 1995

▼ The News-Leader, Springfield, Missouri, June 15, 1995

New Libertarian chief pushes platform changes

"Fund raising is going to be utmost," however, in gaining office, Sheil said.

Robert Edwards / News-Leader

The Libertarian Party could win its first partisan elective office in Missouri in 1996, the party's new state chairwoman predicted.

But a drive for political contributions and a new platform are needed to ensure success, said Kay Sheil of Kansas City.

"Fund raising is going to be utmost," she said.

No monetary goal has been set, nor have offices the party will target been identified, she said. Those are still to come, she said.

Sheil was elected Saturday at the

Libertarians' state convention in Columbia, which drew 55 members.

The Libertarian Party won an automatic spot on the state ballot for 1994 after its 1992 candidates, placed on the ballot by petition, surpassed the state's legal threshold for ballot status by winning more than 2 percent of the popular vote.

Libertarians have retained Bill Johnson of Springfield as the party's non-paid executive director — a position created in January.

Johnson is working on candidate and membership recruitment and helping rewrite the party platform.

The platform will emphasize the party's goal of limiting governmental power and promoting personal freedom and responsibility, he said.

But the national Libertarian Party call to legalize illicit drugs will be downplayed in the new state platform, said Johnson, his party's 1994 U.S. Senate candidate in Missouri. Sheil was his campaign manager.

Johnson said the party can find common ground with more Missourians by stressing issues like economic freedom, family values, "freedom for religion" and freedom from government regulation.

Libertarian leaders will look for 1996 candidates who support the idea of reducing the federal government's imposition of power on the states,

Sheil and Johnson said. This goes hand in hand with the 10th Amendment Coalition, a drive to reassert states' rights, they said.

Sheil said she thinks the party can win a county office or two and possibly a state House seat. No Libertarians have ever held partisan office in the state, although they've had candidates on the ballot in various areas for 20 years.

Outgoing state chairman Phil Horras of Springfield led the party for the past three years. He did not seek reelection, but he said Monday he would remain an active member.

Horras has run for the state House and Senate in recent years. He said he may run for Congress in a few years after his two children get fur-

ther into their teen years.

Johnson's retention as party director was opposed by Horras and a handful of others. They objected to Johnson's work with the 10th Amendment Coalition and the militia groups while he is doing Libertarian organizing.

"Other people look at that as outreach," Johnson said.

His extra-party activities amount to seeking common ground with groups that have a similar anti-big-government agenda, he said.

Most members apparently saw no conflict. They gave Johnson a 50-4 vote of confidence.

No independents day

Americans say they want more choices when they go into the voting booth, but Republicans and Democrats are trying to make it harder for independent or third-party candidates to get on the ballot.

"It's pretty depressing, after years of improvement," said Richard Winger, who heads the San Francisco-based Coalition for Free and Open Elections, which monitors ballot-access issues. "This is the worst year since 1971, when 11 states made it tougher for independents to run."

So far this year Alaska, Idaho and New Mexico have made ballot access more difficult, and Alabama, Illinois and Maine are considering doing so. In Georgia, Arizona and New Hampshire, unsuccessful efforts were made to tighten access rules. In one state, Maryland, an attempt to make access easier failed.

"I think what's happening is a disgrace," said Curtis Gans, director of the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, a nonpartisan think tank that keeps track of voter registration and participation. He said that voters were "hungry for the possibility of other choices" and that limiting "those other choices undermines the political system."

Bill Winter, spokesman for the Libertarian Party, said that so many legislative efforts were "a sign that establishment politicians are running scared, determined to strangle their competition. Both parties feel insecure."

For good reason. Over the last 30 years, many Americans have abandoned their parties and registered as independents. In 1994, the number of registered Democrats dropped to 31.5 percent of eligible voters; the number of Republicans declined to 22.6 percent, and the number of registered independents rose to 12.4 percent of eligible voters.

Last fall, 16 of the 20 Senate contests and nearly half of the 146 competitive House races included independent or third-party candidates — more than in any midterm election since the 1960s.

▲ ABOVE LEFT: *The San Francisco Examiner*
San Francisco, California, June 25, 1995

▲ ABOVE RIGHT: *The Washington Times*
Washington, DC, July 3, 1995

► *Delaware State News*
Dover, Delaware, May 29, 1995

Maryland News

Libertarians gain voters upset with major parties

By Janet Naylor
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Jesse Markowitz passed over the Democratic and Republican parties to join the Libertarian Party of Maryland because he "got tired of voting against people."

"It's getting tougher and tougher to tell them apart," Mr. Markowitz said of the established parties. "People are saying, 'There's got to be somebody out there I can vote for.'"

He hopes to make that the Libertarian Party, which last month became the third officially recognized political party in Maryland.

That recognition, granted by state election officials after Libertarians turned in 10,000 petition signatures in support of their cause, entitles them to have their party listed on Maryland's voter registration forms.

The major parties don't appear to be in any immediate danger from the Libertarians, who now number 300 or so dues-paying members. But the recognition comes as a growing number of voters are refusing to affiliate themselves with the established parties, leaving tens of thousands of potential swing voters in the state.

In the first four months of this year, 20 percent of the 62,353 new voters in the state chose the "decline" option, Maryland's equivalent of "none of the above" for party affiliation on voter-registration forms. Before that, less than 10 percent of registering voters chose the "decline" option.

One reason for the difference may be the federal "motor voter" law that took effect in January. The law, which makes it easier to register by allowing registration at motor vehicle offices or through the mail, may be bringing otherwise disenfranchised voters into the process, say political observers.

That could give Libertarians and independents a hand, while giving the major parties a headache.

"They [the major parties] no longer particularly stand for anything. People feel they just don't have any choice anymore," said Joan Vinson, state chairman of United We Stand Maryland, an offshoot of Ross Perot's 1992 independent presidential bid.

"We have the reality here that we hardly have a second party" in Maryland, said Mrs. Vinson.

That kind of talk is particularly alarming to the state's Republicans, who posted their best showing in decades in the November elections.

"We're going to have to prove to them that we are different," said Joyce Lyons Terhes, the state GOP chairman.

The Republicans' election gains — they came within a whisker of the governor's office and made huge advances in county and State House elections — came after years in which the party steadily chipped away at the longtime Democratic dominance in Maryland voter registration.

After years in which Democratic registration outstripped GOP registration by 2-1 or more, new registrations since January

have recorded one Republican voter for every 1.3 Democrats.

Democrats still hold a 2-1 edge overall, but the party is working to increase its numbers at a pace not seen in recent years.

"We certainly are focusing some increased attention on reaching out to new voters," said Richard Parsons, the party's executive director. "That is safe to say. I don't think we can take anything for granted."

Indeed, the Republican revolution on Capitol Hill seems to be reinvigorating Maryland Democrats, especially younger voters. Where the party once had only a few Young Democrats chapters, there is now one in all 24 jurisdictions, Mr. Parsons said.

"Young voters see [the GOP agenda] as kind of extremist and dangerous to their own interests," he said.

And as federal cutbacks start to be felt in the state's government-dependent economy, voters will turn back toward the Democratic Party, he predicted.

Those cuts have "more of an impact on average Joe Maryland than anyone else in the country," Mr. Parsons said. "When Newt Gingrich sneezes we're going to get double pneumonia."

To Mr. Markowitz, of Gaithersburg, that kind of thinking is the problem. He hopes that his party, with its emphasis on smaller government, can capture new members in Maryland by portraying itself as a viable alternative to the "business as usual" major parties.

Libertarians like Delaware primary

DOVER — Dan Beaver, recently elected chairman of the Libertarian Party of Delaware, said the newly established provisions for holding presidential primary elections in Delaware is a positive step.

"This provision elevates Delaware to the political status it deserves," he said. "It's in the spirit of inclusion, along the tradition of Returns Day in Sussex County. It's a tradition that should be followed nationally."

Party vice-chairman Richard Schwartzman said, "All in all, it's a good law because it allows for reasonable participation by political parties other than Republican and Democrats."

"Unfortunately, the bill doesn't go far enough. Dan and I agree with Sen. (William V.) Roth (R-Del.) that the Delaware primaries should be the first in the country because Delaware was the first state," he said.

CAPITAL JOURNAL
By GERALD F. SEIB

Democrats, GOP Agree on This: Strangle Rivals

THE TWO MAJOR political parties may or may not know how to solve the nation's problems, but give them credit for this much: They know how to stay alive.

Ross Perot made the most serious challenge to two-party dominance in a generation in 1992, and today his United We Stand America organization is pondering whether to become a third party. His effort has energized existing third parties and spawned new ones. At least three powerful American figures—Mr. Perot, Jesse Jackson and Colin Powell—could try running as third-party or independent candidates for president in 1996. One national poll shows that half of Americans think a third party would be a good idea.

So Democrats and Republicans around the country are responding the way big organizations do: They are trying to strangle the competition.

In at least 10 states already this year, legislators have introduced bills to make it more difficult for independent or third-party candidates to get onto ballots. The new requirements range from the minor to the major. One state, Alabama, is considering legislation that would quintuple the current number of petition signatures necessary for ballot access.

"Depending on the state, it's either a nuisance or a major problem," says Bill Winter, a spokesman for the Libertarian Party, one of the old hands at trying to get onto ballots. "It isn't even a conspiracy. All these Democrats and Republicans sat down independently and said, 'Hmmm, maybe it's time we should stop complaining and start doing something.'"

Arizona Libertarian to run for president

MESA — The former chairman of Arizona's Libertarian Party says he's running for president.

Rick Tompkins, 55, yesterday said in announcing his candidacy that he opposes all forms of gun control.

Tompkins also said he wants to cut or eliminate all taxes, legalize drugs and terminate U.S. membership in the United Nations.

AT A TIME when there is lots of loose speculation about a third-party or independent presidential candidate in 1996, this is more than just a footnote. It is a reminder that independent presidential campaigns are a heck of a lot easier to talk about than to actually mount.

It also is important to remember that, by ratcheting up the requirement for small parties or independent candidates to get on the ballots, states aren't simply constructing barriers. They are taking barriers that already exist and making them even higher.

When Mr. Perot decided to run for president in 1992, his staff calculated that he had to gather more than 770,000 signatures to make it onto the ballot in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. That's some 27 times more signatures than a Republican candidate has to gather, calculates Clarence Evjen, an official of the tiny Natural Law Party who has made it his business to track ballot-access issues.

Mr. Evjen argues that to run a national slate of candidates for the House, a new party would have to get more than 1.6 million signatures to meet state requirements—10 times more than a Democrat would need to get. The Libertarian Party calculates that to go further and field a full slate of both federal and statewide candidates, a third party in 1994 would have needed to collect 3.5 million valid petition signatures.

To see what this means inside a state, look at the new Patriot Party in Pennsylvania. Last year, its statewide candidates had to gather and submit 26,000 signatures to get on the November ballot. By contrast, a Democratic or Republican candidate needed 1,000 signatures to get on a primary ballot.

OF COURSE, the laws setting up these requirements are written by state legislatures run by the very Democrats and Republicans threatened by upstart candidates and parties. The laws they write ensure that a would-be third party's first fight isn't on the battlefield of ideas; it's on the expensive legal battlefield of petitions and challenges.

On a national level, this all means that the only people likely to have much real success as presidential candidates are those like Mr. Perot, who have saddlebags full of their own money, or Gen. Powell, who already have overpowering name recognition and latent support. But even for them, it will be an organizational feat to get into the 1996 ballgame.

Without doubt, there are real reasons to like the stability the two-party system has afforded America. Few countries would invite the kind of political paralysis that periodically befalls countries such as Israel that have politically splintered systems. There, a proliferation of tiny parties produces ruling coalitions so thin and fragile that fringe parties acquire enormous leverage over everybody else. Most third parties in America have quirky or extreme ideas that mean they probably would fail the tests of popular and financial support, even if the electoral playing field were level.

On the other hand, it was an upstart new party called the Republicans that produced Abraham Lincoln in a matter of just a few years at a fairly important juncture in American history. Seems a shame to construct even higher barriers if they would keep down the next Lincoln.

Westover man named Libertarian official

A Westover man has been elected as vice-chair of the Libertarian Party for the 1st district in West Virginia.

Bob Jones was appointed recently in Hurricane, according John K. Brown, state chairman.

Two other vice chairs have also been appointed, "due to increasing membership, growing interest in the party, and more party activities," Brown said in a press release.

Bill Clem of Charles Town will serve the 2nd district and Pat Adkins of Hart will serve in the 3rd district.

The new vice chairs will assist in membership drives, ballot access and public awareness.

More than 2.2 million votes were cast for Libertarian candidates for state and federal office in 1994, and more than 130 Libertarians serve in elected and appointed offices across the country.

In West Virginia, the Libertarian Party says it is the fastest growing party with dues paying membership increasing 56 percent in 1995.

Libertarians promote message of choice

By KRISTIN RISLEY
Missourian staff writer

The denouncement of government growth and the promotion of party growth and awareness dominated the discussion at the 1995 Missouri Libertarian Party Convention.

The convention, held Saturday at Columbia's Ramada Inn, was attended by a diverse group of state party officers, committee members and county chairs. Members held an afternoon general session, following a series of presentations by convention guests.

The Libertarian Party believes governments must not violate the rights of the individual. It advocates democracy through individual choice, cutbacks in government power and the free-market economy.

Bill Johnson, executive director of the Missouri Libertarian Party, spoke of reconciling the party split between the old-party traditionalists and the new-party activists.

Those in attendance seemed to be of one mind, as they joked about the current political situation and the public's traditional ignorance of their party. A spirit of comradery prevailed, and members rallied together to brainstorm ways to increase party recognition.

LaDonna Higgins, St. Louis County Libertarian Party chair, conducted an educational presentation on the organization of Missouri's political parties.

"I think we're getting more and more prepared," Higgins said. "We're growing all the time. I'm constantly recruiting new people."

In 1992, the Libertarian Party petitioned for ballot access, which was granted in 1994. In order to earn ballot access, a party must garner more than 2 percent of the vote in a statewide

election.

About 2 million people voted Libertarian in the 1992 presidential election, said Steve Desbach, National Chairman of the party. In addition, 109,000 registered Libertarian voters exist nationally, with 146 Libertarians holding elected or appointed office.

"We are going to double our membership at the next national convention from what it was at the last one," Desbach predicted. "We will not be kept off the ballot or out of the political race."

Johnson attributes this to the public's dissatisfaction with the two main political parties.

"People are so jaded. No matter who you vote for—Republican or Democrat—the bureaucracy remains the same," he said.

Desbach emphasized the party's views on individualism.

"We don't advocate any individual choice," Desbach said. "We advocate your right to make those choices."

Desbach and Johnson followed guest speakers Jo Jorgensen and Mike Ginsberg.

Jorgensen, who is seeking the 1996 Libertarian Party vice-presidential nomination, spoke about her belief that Republican politicians are selling out freedom. She compared Republican politicians to phone-sex operators, who tease, tempt and arouse people but have nothing to offer them except large bills.

"Government has failed us," she said. "Everything the government does, the private sector can do more efficiently, more effectively and with less cost."

Ginsberg, who is the chair of the Illinois Libertarian Party Committee, was the final speaker and recounted his recent trip to the Serb-dominated region of the former Yugoslavia.

▲ ABOVE LEFT:
The Wall Street Journal
New York, NY
June 14, 1995

▲ ABOVE RIGHT:
The Dominion Post
Morgantown, West Virginia
June 14, 1995

◀ LEFT: *Tucson Citizen*
Tucson, Arizona
May 25, 1995

◀ RIGHT:
Columbia Missourian
Columbia, Missouri
June 11, 1995