

# LIBERTY PLEDGE

## newsletter

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

MARCH 2003

### OUR NEWEST (PAY) PAL ...

## Dot.com millionaire says he's Libertarian

Peter Thiel, the man who revolutionized how millions of people pay for online products, has announced that he is a libertarian.

Thiel, who co-founded the online payment company PayPal, revealed his libertarianism in a March 6 interview with United Press International (UPI).

When asked about his political beliefs, Thiel said, "Well, I was pretty libertarian when I started [in business]. I'm way libertarian now."

Over the years, Thiel, 35, has made no secret of his libertarian/conservative beliefs: While attending Stanford University in 1987, he helped found *The Stanford Review*, which attacked the "intolerant and overwhelmingly politically correct liberal atmosphere" at the Ivy League school.

In a September 2001 interview with *Wired* magazine, Thiel said he traced his libertarian beliefs to two books he read in high school: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's "Gulag Archipelago" and J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings."

Tolkien's famous fantasy trilogy – a parable about the corrupting allure of power – "convinced him of the perils of concentrated authority," reported *Wired*.

After working in New York for several years as an attorney, Thiel moved to Palo Alto, California in 1997 and helped launch PayPal. The company pioneered software that allowed money to be stored in an electronic form and securely transferred via e-mail.

The product opened e-commerce to buyers without credit cards, and was a boon for online retailers and customers. Over the next four years – as most e-commerce companies first soared, then crashed and burned – PayPal quietly built a base of 16 million users in 36 countries. The company now controls 90% of the non-credit card online-payment market.

As UPI noted, "PayPal was able to achieve profitability at a time when most [high-tech] companies were in a huge slump."

PayPal went public in 2001, and in 2002 Thiel sold the company to eBay for \$1.5 billion.

Thiel is currently the managing director of Thiel Capital, a \$100 million private equity firm investing in growth opportunities.

## GA LP targets sin taxes

Georgia Libertarians have set up a website to stop a massive, \$490 million tax hike proposed by Republican Gov. Sonny Perdue.

Perdue wants to raise the tax on a pack of cigarettes by 48 cents, a six-pack of beer by 14 cents, a bottle of wine by 15 cents, and a bottle of liquor by 50 cents.

"In the last 10 years, and excluding the [state-run] lottery, growth in Georgia government spending has outpaced inflation to the tune of \$2 billion," said LP state chair Helmut Forren. "It needs to end now."

The web site -- [www.404-freedom.com](http://www.404-freedom.com) -- lets Georgia residents send a prepared e-mail asking their state legislators to cut spending rather than raise taxes.

### HIGH-PROFILE DRUG WAR CRITIC...

## Judge Gray 'hates' drugs – and Prohibition

Judge James Gray "hates drugs" – and that's exactly why he wants to end drug prohibition.

"I hate drugs so much that I want to change our policy so that we can reduce drug usage and the other harms these dangerous drugs are causing," said Gray, a Superior Court judge who recently joined the Libertarian Party. "These drugs could not be made more available than they are under our present system. We can't even keep them out of our prisons, much less off our streets."

Gray has a unique platform on which to stand as he campaigns to end the war on drugs.

As a judge on the Orange County, California Superior Court, he is one of the party's highest-ranking public officeholders, with about 2.9 million constituents.

And as the author of a critically acclaimed book on the failure of prohibition – "Why Our Drug Laws Have Failed and What We Can Do About It" – he is already considered one of the nation's most articulate critics of the Drug War. Publisher's Clearinghouse called the book "a scathing jeremiad against the war on drugs" and "provocative and topical."

## GOP throttles third parties

The Colorado House of Representatives – faced with a budget crisis, severe drought and a runaway war on drugs – has responded by cracking down on what it sees as the real root of the state's problems: Too many people are voting for those pesky third parties.

To reduce that non-problem, House Republicans rallied behind HB 1142, a bill that originally placed Draconian restrictions on third parties in Colorado. HB 1142 now has been amended to where it only forces third parties to waste taxpayer dollars in needless statewide party primaries.

But such a costly unfunded mandate on local government in the midst of Colorado's current budget crisis makes as much sense as dropping napalm on the Hayman fire.

As amended, the bill now requires third parties to hold primaries if they have two or more candidates receiving at least 30 percent of the delegates at the party's state convention.

Had that rule been in effect in 2002, the Libertarian Party would have had to have statewide primaries for governor and U.S. Senate between gubernatorial contenders Ralph Shnelvar and Jim Vance and senatorial hopefuls Rick Stanley and Steve D'Ippolito. Instead, the party designated Shnelvar and Stanley at its Leadville convention, with Shnelvar winning a simple majority on the first ballot and Stanley on the second.

Given that the Libertarian Party (and, to the best of our knowledge, all other Colorado third parties) prefers to settle its affairs at its own convention, does it really make sense to force all 64 Colorado counties to bear the cost of extra primary elections?

Those costs will be formidable, because the last two elections saw Libertarian, Green, American Constitution, Natural Law, Reform, Freedom and Prohibition party candidates as well as the usual major-party suspects. Because any unaffiliated voter can declare a party at the polls, counties could conceivably have to print ballots for nine separate party primaries – even if no voters are registered in minor parties in that county.

To their credit, Democrats generally opposed this political power play – even though they have probably been hurt more by defections to the leftish Greens than Republicans have been by the Libertarian Party.

That's because Libertarians, who oppose the war on drugs and restrictions on abortion as well as welfare-state programs, draw from both major parties as well as luring alienated voters who probably wouldn't vote at all if the Libertarians weren't on the ballot. Greens also draw alienated voters, but otherwise, they draw disproportionately from Democratic ranks.

Happily, legislative Democrats still seem to have the old-fashioned idea that they should try to earn votes. Judging by HB 1142, Republicans prefer to force third parties off the ballot, thus herding Libertarian votes into the GOP camp as "the lesser of two evils."

But the truth is that politicians who rig the system aren't the lesser of two evils at all. They're just evil.

(Left) *Denver Post*, Denver, Colorado  
-- March 8

(Below) *The Troy Eccentric*, Troy,  
Michigan -- February 23

## Libertarians sue candidate

By Annette Kingsbury, Staff Writer

Calling statements made during a candidate forum "slanderous misrepresentation," the Libertarian Party of Oakland County has filed a defamation lawsuit against Troy City Council candidate Cristina Pappageorge.

The suit was filed in Troy's 52-4 District Court Tuesday in response to statements Pappageorge made in a videotaped candidate forum Feb. 12. The statements referred to the Libertarians' stance on drug policy.

In closing remarks at a forum sponsored by a Troy homeowners association, Pappageorge said Libertarians want to legalize drugs such as marijuana and noted incumbent Councilman Martin Howrylak's affiliation with the Libertarian Party.

Howrylak, one of two Libertarians on the city council, said Friday he was not consulted about the lawsuit.

"I was disappointed to learn the Libertarian Party had decided to file a lawsuit against Mrs. Pappageorge," he said. "While the comments she made were unfortunate, I think a lawsuit is unnecessary in a city council race."

Pappageorge said she had not seen the lawsuit as of Thursday, but stood by her earlier comments, saying she got her information about the party's drug position from the Libertarians' own Web site.

"I don't think we said it wrong," she said, calling the lawsuit "foolish of them. This is a nonpartisan race and I think it's going to hurt Martin. Sometimes people protest too much."

Libertarian Party spokesman Greg Dirasian said the lawsuit has nothing to do with Troy's April 7 city council election and he's not worried that Howrylak will suffer a backlash.

"First, this is slander. She said on television Libertarians say it's OK to do drugs, and we don't say that," Dirasian said. "It's not even about the campaign. It's about misrepresenting our position."

"It's true Libertarians want to legalize drugs. But that's not the same thing as saying it's OK to use drugs. There are many goals in doing this. One of them is to stop gang violence. The other thing is drug addiction is a medical problem and should be treated as such."

The lawsuit asks for \$10,000 in damages and was filed by attorneys David Collver and Leonard Schwartz of Hazel Park.

## Multiparty rally calls for recall of governor

By David M. Drucker

SACRAMENTO – The estimated 350 activists who gathered in front of the Capitol on Saturday to demand the recall of Gov. Gray Davis were a collection of Republicans mixed with Libertarians and members of the ultra-conservative American Independent Party.

The multi-party event, outside the state GOP convention going on in Sacramento, was the first major rally to counter charges that the recall campaign is a sour-grapes reaction to the dismal showing of GOP candidates in last November's election. However, observers noted that only conservatives showed up for the event.

The event was emceed by former GOP Assemblyman Howard Kaloogian and featured speeches by outgoing California Republican Party Chairman Shawn Steel, Assemblyman Ray Haynes, R-Temecula, and Sen. Tom McClintock, R-Thousand Oaks.

They were joined by two conservative talk-radio hosts, a Libertarian Party official and Ron Gulke, the most recent gubernatorial candidate for the American Independent Party.

"Some people have said: 'What reasons do we have to recall Gray Davis?' " Haynes said. "Well, first of all, he lied to us when he got elected."

Apple Valley resident and San Bernardino Republican Party delegate Twila Hartz agreed. "I think the public did not know, because they were not told the truth about the state's finances."

Five Davis supporters turned out with chants of "sour grapes, sour grapes."

Roger Salazar, the governor's spokesman for recall matters, said the political leaning of the Saturday's crowd proves that the recall campaign is anything but the multi-party movement Steel claimed.

Non-partisan political analyst Sherry Bebitch Jeffe said the recall is destined for failure if it does not attract the support of grassroots Democrats and independent voters.

"I didn't see a groundswell of support for a recall," Bebitch Jeffe said. "I saw a crowd that would add credence to the governor's claim that it is a partisan movement."

Republican consultant Sal Russo, who was Bill Simon's chief strategist during his failed bid to unseat Davis, said conditions are ripe for a successful recall campaign.

The party's resolutions committee approved a recall resolution Saturday, and the 1,400 convention delegates were expected to back it today.

Recall supporters are waiting for approval of their petition by the Secretary of State, which they expect this week, before they begin collecting 897,158 valid signatures 12 percent of those who voted in the governor's race in November. They have 160 days to do it.

(Left) *San Bernardino County Sun*, San Bernardino, California -- February 22

(Below) *Raleigh News & Observer*, Raleigh, North Carolina -- February 27

## Private lawyers may prosecute criminal cases

By Gary D. Robertson

RALEIGH, NC (AP) – A robbery victim believes the local district attorney has botched the prosecution of his attacker. Instead of giving up, he pays a high-powered lawyer to seek justice.

That's the idea behind a bill that would allow private attorneys to prosecute felony offenses in North Carolina independently, without the supervision of a local district attorney's office.

For centuries, in the common law tradition, cases were commonly prosecuted by private attorneys and even the victims themselves. The practice appears to be nearly extinct in the United States.

The idea is opposed by North Carolina's district attorneys, who say it's fraught with problems. Still, some people see private prosecutions as a way to ensure victims get a fair shake in the courts.

"On the surface it looks like it's moving in the right direction," said Barbara Howe, a leader in the North Carolina Libertarian Party. "The concept of trending toward private justice is a good thing."

Under the bill, a lawyer with a North Carolina license could ask a grand jury to indict a suspect on a felony. If an indictment is returned, the attorney would have the same powers as a state prosecutor, getting a court date on the docket, presenting evidence at trial and seeking a verdict. Taxpayers wouldn't foot the bill for the private prosecutor. The measure requires a change in the state constitution, so a statewide referendum would be required to become law.

Rep. Paul Luebke filed the bill at the request of a constituent who says it would help crime victims who feel wronged when district attorneys won't pursue their cases.

The bill also implies that some DAs aren't seeking justice, sometimes for political reasons.

"If we find the job not being done by public prosecutors, then citizens have a right and the duty to initiate private prosecutions," said Jon Roland, a former Libertarian candidate for Texas attorney general.

(Right) *Baltimore Sun*, Baltimore, Maryland  
-- February 23

(Below) WABC News, New York, New York  
-- February 5

## Political group plans to hand out toy guns

In a plan that is already outraging local parents, a political group plans to hand out hundreds of toy guns to school children in Harlem Thursday.

The Manhattan Libertarian Party is calling their program "Guns For Tots," and they say they're doing it to protest a bill before the City Council that would ban the sale of most toy guns in New York.

Parents at PS 72 got a letter Wednesday that alerted them to the fact that their child may receive a toy gun as they leave school Thursday. The group behind it says the City Council is considering "silly" legislation that merits a silly response. Still, some parents don't think their plan is funny.

Says Gary Snyder, of the Manhattan Libertarian Party: "We're not giving them firearms; we're giving them toys that have been used for decades in good fun – good, clean fun."

The giveaway is a form of protest against a proposed law introduced by two city council members. The bill would ban any toy guns that are shaped like the real thing. Lawmakers say they can easily be painted black and mistaken for a real weapon.

City Councilman David Weprin, Queens (D), says: "I think we're going to prevent a number of incidents in the future. If we save one life it's worthwhile."

But the Libertarian Party says the council is legislating morality by limiting what toys parents can give their kids. They say the number of children mistakenly shot by police is small, and that most incidents, like the fatal shooting of a 17-year-old in Harlem last month, involve someone purposely using a toy gun in the commission of a crime.

The libertarians have previously used unusual means to get their point across, like giving away free cigarettes to protest the increased tax on tobacco. But why, in this case, was a minority community picked?

"Because we think that kids on Park Avenue or Sutton Place wouldn't appreciate a new toy as much as kids uptown," said Snyder.

That explanation didn't sit well with parents at PS 72, who were informed about the group's plan in letter from school officials Wednesday.

One parent, Marina Lopez, said: "Especially in this area, where so many things go wrong . . . so many bad things have happened. I just don't like the idea."

## Libertarians seek a state to call their own

By Marego Athans  
*Baltimore Sun*

Plans are under way for an invasion of New Hampshire. Or Wyoming. Or maybe Delaware, Montana or Alaska. Sparsely populated and independent in spirit, they're all attractive targets for a certain bloodless coup in the making.

Within the next several years, according to the plan, 20,000 Libertarians would move to a single state and begin infiltrating. They'd get jobs, join civic groups, get elected and take a hatchet to taxes and laws.

In this utopia called the Free State Project, schools would be severed from the state, gun-control laws abolished, drugs legalized, health and social services privatized, most federal aid rejected. Government's only job would be to protect against "force and fraud."

"The Libertarian movement has existed for decades and produced leading intellectuals and Nobel Prize winners, but despite all that it hasn't had much influence on a national level," says Free State Project founder Jason Sorens. "I think it's time we concentrate our resources in a place where we have a shot at actually winning."

Anyone looking for traces of nuttiness will be disappointed by this 26-year-old Yale doctoral student who speaks in understatement and appears archetypically collegiate. A Libertarian since his teen-age years, Sorens floated his idea in a July 2001 article in the online Libertarian Enterprise. The Internet worked its magic and Libertarians around the country began pledging to move – 2,600 so far.

The drill goes like this: After the figure reaches 5,000, participants vote on their state of choice from a list of 10, selected because they have fewer than 1.5 million residents (easier to sway elections that way), a promising job market, a culture deemed "pro-liberty" and low reliance on federal aid.

After 20,000 have signed on – Sorens expects this by about 2005 – the migration begins. By 2010, Sorens says, the group should be ready to start influencing policy, first as "foot soldiers" to the Libertarians already living in the state and then by running for local and state office.

Libertarian parties in New Hampshire and Maine have endorsed the movement, and both are lobbying the Free State Project to move to their states. Other states under consideration include Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont and Alaska.