

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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Working tirelessly, giving generously for liberty

Trevor Southerland, chair of LP Youth Caucus, has been a pledger since age 17.

Trevor Southerland's service to the Libertarian Party is inspiring. In five short years, he has held positions on the grassroots, college, county, state and national levels. One of the few things he hasn't yet attempted is running for public office, but he's got a really good excuse: At age 19, he doesn't qualify as a candidate in Chattanooga, Tenn., where he lives.

The current treasurer of the Tennessee LP, Southerland has been a member of the party since he was only 14, and established the affiliate in his county in Georgia when he was 15. He then served as secretary of the Hamilton County, Tenn., LP, of which he is now chairman.

He is also editor of the LPTN newsletter, *The Voice of Freedom*, and president of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga's (UTC) campus libertarian group.

At the 2004 LP national convention, Southerland was elected as the first chairman of the LP's Youth Caucus. He also came 19 votes short of being elected as an at-large representative to the Libertarian National Committee.

As one of the youngest officers in the history of the party, Southerland is now a student at UTC and plans to graduate in 2007 with a major in political science and a minor in business administration. After graduation, he said, "I'm hoping to get a job in Washington, DC, or another major city, and advance the Libertarian cause." And if his prior service is any indication, he'll likely make good on that goal.

Like many party members, Southerland realized early on that he was a Libertarian. Unlike some other Libertarians, however, he began taking it seriously while he was still young.

This is why Southerland doesn't let his position as a student or his age stop him from supporting the LP in every way. Aside from his many official positions, he volunteers for Libertarian campaigns and routinely collects signatures for ballot access.

Southerland even financially supports the LP. He became a Liberty Pledger in 2003 — at 17 — and finds giving regularly to be both a principled and practical form of support.

"I believe in the Libertarian Party," he noted. "I have even stopped in a couple of times to the national office, and I always find the staff working very hard to advance our causes. The party can't survive without funding, and I want to make sure that I'm doing everything possible to support my party with what I can."

Simply put, he said, "You ought to support what you believe in with all you can — your time, your finances or your wisdom."

Part of Southerland's mature passion comes from his family,

particularly his grandfather.

"When I was younger my grandfather was active in the 'patriot movement,'" he said. "I remember passing out copies of the Declaration of Independence on the Fourth of July at our city's festivities when I was young.

"I once asked my grandfather 'Are you Republican or Democrat?' and he told me 'If I was forced to join a party, it'd be the Libertarian Party.' After reading the Constitution, I knew that I was a Libertarian — and wondered if the Democrats or Republicans had bothered to read the Constitution."

Southerland first attended a national LP convention in 2002, when it was held in Indianapolis — and at the age of 17, he had been asked to give a speech at the banquet.

Two years later, at the 2004 national convention in Atlanta, Southerland solidified his role as a powerful advocate for youth outreach and participation of young people in the LP.

As mentioned earlier, he was elected chairman of the National Libertarian Party Youth Caucus (www.nlpyc.org), which exists "to be of any assistance to any college [or other youth-oriented] Libertarian groups, and to help out by offering solutions to problems by using our own experience."

Southerland believes that youth outreach is a part of a broader focus on outreach and acquiring new members of the LP.

The general attitude of the LP is "that people should want to come to the LP," he said. "I think we need to prove to them why they should want to be associated with the LP!"

Surprisingly enough, with several jobs, schoolwork, and his voluminous vitae of LP activism, Southerland finds time and energy to cultivate other interests. He is an enthusiastic supporter of his university's athletic and music departments, and is a leader in his church community. He admitted that he is stretched a little thin sometimes: "There are only so many hours in the day."

However, he continued with characteristic optimism, "I try to use at least 20 of them productively!"

With focus and drive like this, the Republicans and Democrats better watch out! When Southerland can run for office as a Libertarian he will certainly be a formidable opponent.

And having gained more political experience before he could legally vote than many people have in a lifetime, Southerland stands to be a leader in the LP (and the broader libertarian movement) for quite a long time!



The National Libertarian Party Youth Caucus (above) was formed at the 2004 national LP convention, electing Trevor Southerland (far right) as president at their inaugural meeting.

Official: Third party has key role to play

By Bill Rufty

Former Winter Haven Mayor and **Libertarian Party** official Carl Strang said recent political fights over Terri Schiavo and the Patriot Act have caused many conservatives to ask the question: Just what is a conservative?

Strang, 71, formerly a Republican, has served on the Libertarian Party's executive committee and was a delegate to the Libertarian Party convention last year.

While other, flashier third parties tend to eclipse it at presidential election time – such as Texas billionaire Ross Perot's two runs in 1992 and 1996 and Ralph Nader's Green Party run in 2000 – the Libertarians keep on a steady course. They bang heads both on the left and right when those philosophies stray from what they believe is the most important tenet of the founding fathers: less government intrusion in all aspects of citizens' lives.

The fight over whether to keep Terri Schiavo connected to her feeding tubes split conservatives and Republicans, with many social conservatives believing that it was their moral obligation to keep her alive and many constitutional, or "process" conservatives, saying that government had no right to interfere in a family decision.

"This word 'conservative' has so many definitions nowadays," Strang said.

"Whatever happened to the concept of limited government?" he asked. "Congress totally ignored the ninth and 10th Amendments to the Constitution when it got involved in the case."

Strang was referring to the two amendments that say that powers not specifically granted to Congress are given to the states and the citizens.

He maintains that Congress did not have the constitutional right to get involved in the Schiavo case, that it was a state matter and a personal, individual matter.

"Somebody always wants to meddle and there are always those people who think they have to do something, but they don't have the power or right to do something," he said.

There is actually a libertarian bloc – little "I" when referring to the philosophy – within the Republican Party, a group that believes government shouldn't interfere with personal rights.

"In Congress, there is a Liberty Caucus; they don't want to call themselves 'libertarian,'" he said.

Strang said he is not under the illusion that the Libertarian Party will become a major political party with a majority in Congress, but he says it has an important role to play.

"I think the strength and potential of the Libertarian Party is as a force to educate people about what our Constitution says and the need to guard our personal rights," he said.

The Patriot Act, enacted after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, is one such case.

Congress is conducting hearings on whether to re-enact the law, which grants broad powers of search, after it ends later this year.

"First of all it is very wrong for us to trample on our constitutional rights just in the name of security," Strang said. "We always have to live with an amount of risk in life. The answer is better intelligence."

He scoffs at those who say that the dangers in the modern world are far different from those envisioned by the writers of the Constitution in the 18th century.

"I think the founding fathers were well aware of the threat of terrorism and danger from outside. They had the British to contend with and they weren't easy to distinguish from the general American population," Strang said.

"But, unfortunately, several generations of Americans have now grown up thinking that the government can take their rights away at will," he said.

(Left) *Lakeland Florida Ledger*, Lakeland, Florida – April 11, 2005

(Below) *Noblesville Daily Times*, Noblesville, Indiana – April 7, 2005

Libertarian convention will focus on upcoming election

By Rebecca L. Sandlin

Hamilton County **Libertarians** will convene Saturday not only to elect a new county chair but to wish the current chair well in what he calls the party's most important race in 2006.

Mike Kole is stepping down from the position in order to focus on his campaign for Indiana Secretary of State.

"I announced to our county members and supporters quite a while ago that I would be stepping aside in order to give potential candidates for chair the maximum amount of time to prepare themselves for the position," he said.

Kole said how well the Libertarian Party does in the Secretary of State's race is crucial for the party's future in Indiana.

"Secretary of State is huge for us because everything is on the line," he explained. "At this stage of our development, and because of the rules the other parties created for third parties, the Secretary of State race is actually more important to Hoosier Libertarians than the governor's race was."

Kole must win 2 percent of the vote in November 2006 in order for Libertarians to be listed on future ballots. The only way the party can get back on the ballot again would be through a petition.

Even though he is stepping aside, Kole said he will still work to build the party in Hamilton County.

SAFE Act gains support

By Joe Hanel

WASHINGTON — Gun rights groups and liberals came together Tuesday to back reforms to the Patriot Act sponsored by Sen. Ken Salazar and three other senators.

The Security and Freedom Enhancement Act, or SAFE Act, would cut back some of the most controversial aspects of the Patriot Act, which was passed shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks to give federal agents greater surveillance powers.

“I come to this from the perspective of law enforcement,” said Salazar, a Democrat and Colorado’s former attorney general. He said the government must balance the needs to fight terrorists and preserve civil liberties.

“I believe the SAFE Act achieves that balance,” he said.

The SAFE Act’s changes include:

A) Putting a seven-day time limit on the authority for “sneak-and-peek” searches. The Patriot Act lets the government keep searches secret for weeks or months.

B) Forbidding wiretaps without specifying the person or phone line to be tapped.

C) Limiting access to personal documents, including library records, without letting suspects challenge the government in court.

D) Narrowing the definition of a “terrorist” group. Right now, anti-abortion protesters and other groups fear they could be branded as terrorists.

Salazar stood with senators Larry Craig, R-Idaho; Dick Durbin, D-Ill.; and Russ Feingold, D-Wis., at a Capitol Hill news conference to promote their bill, which will be introduced today in both houses of Congress.

Representatives from a broad spectrum of groups stood with them, including the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Conservative Union, Gun Owners of America, the **Libertarian Party** and the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms.

“You have a very powerful coalition here that includes gun owners, but also includes the ACLU,” Salazar said.

Tuesday morning, U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales told a Senate hearing that he is open to changing the Patriot Act. It was the first time the Bush administration had signaled a willingness to compromise, Feingold said.

The Justice Department said Tuesday it had used the Patriot Act’s authority to secretly gather information on people 35 times. It has never used the Patriot Act to get bookstore or library records, medical records or gun sale records, according to a news release.

Salazar said Gonzales told him before the Senate confirmed him as attorney general that he would take a fresh look at the Patriot Act. Salazar backed Gonzales when many Democrats attacked him over prisoner abuse scandals that have plagued the Bush administration.

(Left) *Daily Times Call*, Longmont, Colorado – April 6, 2005

(Below) *Herald-Sun*, Raleigh, North Carolina – March 24, 2005

Panel advances bill to ease ballot access

By Gary D. Robertson

Independent and third-party candidates would have an easier time getting onto North Carolina ballots under a measure approved Wednesday by a House committee.

North Carolina has one of the highest barriers to ballot access for non-major party candidates in the nation, so high that a federal judge ruled last year that it placed an “unconstitutional burden” on unaffiliated candidates.

A similar bill passed in the Senate in 2001 but failed on the House floor that year. This year, though, the judge’s ruling may force legislators to make a change.

The measure, approved by the House election laws committee with only a couple of no votes, would reduce petition requirements and give more access to diverse political views, supporters said.

“It brings us in line with the rest of the states,” said Barbara Howe, last year’s **Libertarian Party** candidate for governor. “We want to give the voters of North Carolina the voices they want.”

Under the current law, third parties such as the Libertarians must collect 69,734 signatures or 2 percent of the votes cast for governor in 2004 to be able to field candidates in 2006 and 2008. Under the proposed legislation, that threshold would be reduced to 0.5 percent of the turnout, or 17,434 votes.

Howe said the present requirement means that the party must pay people to collect signatures every four years, eating into party money that could otherwise be spent on actual campaigning.

The measure would also make it easier for third parties to stay on the ballot for each successive election cycle. Now, a party’s presidential or gubernatorial candidate must draw 10 percent of the vote for the party to stay on the ballot; the legislation would reduce that to 2 percent. Howe got 1.5 percent of the vote in 2004.

The North Carolina Green Party has never met the current requirements and thus isn’t officially recognized by the State Board of Elections. Rep. Paul Miller, D-Durham, the bill sponsor, said Democrats aren’t threatened by third parties. He’s more hopeful about passage of this year’s bill, which now goes to another committee.

The party is over on Tax Day: April 15th

By Gordon T. Anderson

NEW YORK - In years past, big city post offices were like carnivals on Tax Day.

There were bands and disc jockeys. Guys in gorilla costumes and women dressed as bananas. There were even beds on the sidewalk.

This year, however, the scene outside Manhattan's main post office was decidedly muted.

In other words, there wasn't much of a party. And if the city that never sleeps is drowsy, can the rest of America be far behind?

Since the late 1990s, the IRS and the tax preparation industry have aggressively promoted the idea of e-filing, electronically transmitted returns that bypass the Postal Service entirely.

The practice has grown steadily, and this year, e-filers will outnumber paper filers for the first time. According to the IRS, about 63 percent of all returns submitted in 2005 will be filed electronically.

That has one obvious implication. If you do your taxes online, you don't need to stand on a line at the post office.

On Tuesday of this week, more than 1.2 million people visited the IRS Web site, according to research firm Comscan. Twice as many will be on the site today.

TurboTax.com and HRBlock.com also reported predictably heavy traffic.

Corporate America seems to be noticing, though it's not quite ready to sound a death knell.

The firms that opted out of using Tax Day as a promotional event say their decisions were mostly logistical.

"We skipped it this year because we were focusing on other things," said K.C. Cavanagh, spokeswoman for the Westin Hotel chain, which last year was responsible for putting beds and pajama-clad employees on the streets.

If the commercial resonance of April 15 is fading, the day remains an important political symbol.

The **Libertarian Party** uses it to spread its philosophy of limited government. From coast to coast, local branches of the party hold colorful events.

In Florida, according to state chairman Doug Klippel, Libertarians will be out in Jacksonville, Orlando, and West Palm Beach.

"There will be people dressed as patriots, and a couple of people will show up with balls-and-chains," says Klippel.

They'll also be carrying signs intended to reinforce the party's anti-tax message. One asks filers: "Wouldn't you rather be taking your money to the bank?"

Other protesters will fan out across America, too. A number of gay rights groups will stage events, to argue for legal recognition of same-sex marriages.

The tax angle of the gay marriage issue came to a head recently in Massachusetts. Same-sex couples there were recognized as married by the state, but not by the federal government.

Marriage Equality California is planning a rally on the steps of the Oakland post office to argue that Golden State gays "pay first class taxes for second class citizenship."

Anti-war groups will also use "Tax Day" as a battle cry. A coalition calling itself the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee is planning events at scores of locations from Maine to California.

There will be live music in Tulsa, potluck meals in Berkeley, and a parade in Andover, Mass. There, anti-war protesters will march a half-mile or so from an IRS sorting facility to the headquarters of Raytheon, a defense contractor.

As political theater, anti-tax rituals are a time honored tradition dating back to the Boston Tea Party. But is the public square emptying out?

"We have noticed that over the past few years, the crowds have thinned a bit," says Libertarian Klippel.

But even in the Electronic Age, the soapbox has a place.

"Technology makes it easier to file your return," says Klippel. "But it doesn't make it any less painful."

Ed Thompson changes mind, accepts Dist. 5 seat

By Bob Kliebenstein

When Ed Thompson first learned he won the Tomah City Council's Fifth Aldermanic Dist. seat as an unregistered write-in candidate, he was not interested in filling the vacancy.

But Thompson, who served as Tomah mayor and was the Libertarian Party candidate for governor, has changed his mind.

Thompson will formally accept the position on Friday at Tomah City Hall. In the April 5 election, Thompson received 31 votes. John Buick, who was a registered write-in, received three votes. Ironically, Thompson urged Buick to run for the seat, vacated when incumbent Dan Ludeking did not seek re-election. Thompson was one of the three people who voted for Buick.

"I am honored by the confidence of the people of Tomah have shown by electing me to serve," Thompson said. "I would be shirking my responsibility and duty if I were to decline."

(Above) *CNN.com*, New York, New York – April 15, 2005

(Right) *The Tomah Journal*, Tomah, Wisconsin – April 6, 2005