



Lone Star Liberty

The Official Monthly Newsletter of the Libertarian Party of Texas
December 2006

2007 Legislative Bills

by Rock Howard, rockmh@austin.rr.com

It is time to start drafting and submitting bills for the 2007 session. Here are a few I am considering, in no particular order.

- 1) End Primary Screenout (HB 1721 from 2005 session)
- 2) Change ballot retention from 5% in statewide race to 2%.
- 3) End ability of politicians to stockpile donations from previous campaigns.
- 4) End subsidy of sports teams at all levels of government in Texas.
- 5) Disallow foreign company involvement in major transportation projects in Texas.
- 6) Require county by county referendum for any toll road financing plan.
- 7) Eliminate straight party ticket voting.
- 8) End the newly instigated busines tax.
- 9) End the newly instigated cigarette tax.
- 10) Impose limits on public indebtedness for municipalities.
- 11) Allow overvotes in single winner elections. (i.e., Approval voting.)
- 12) Strengthen proscriptions against the use of eminent domain.

Other bills we should support (or work for filing if necessary):

The TABOR bill from 2005 as originally drafted. (Carl Isset will probably file this.)

The doctor's note defence for compassionate use of marijuana. (Elliott Naishtat may file this.)

Where we stand going into this session:

- 1) We have no close friends anymore given the departure of Huff and Keel.
- 2) Strama may not be willing to work with us anymore as he won with over 60%. (But I think he will.)
- 3) There are now 6 legislators where we can claim "kingmaker" status. Three are first time Democrat winners as Strama was in 2004.

This and our generally increasing vote totals are the biggest factors in our favor.

We should ask our candidates if any of them are now friendly with the winning house or senate candidates in their races. I, for one, am pretty sure my opponent for State Senate District 14 now hates me thoroughly. But there are things that I can do to repair that gulf.

Bottom line: We should have more clout, but we are lacking in many good connections with sitting legislators.

The Texas Legislature Online site has been upgraded and bill tracking is now easier. Already I have scanned the early bills pertaining to elections and found:

- 1) Two different bills that add a requirement for a paper audit trail for election ballots. (Yeah!)
- 2) Two different bills that attempt to impose donation limits on candidates. (Boo!)
- 3) A bill and accompanying resolution by Strama that would create a redistricting committee made up entirely of people selected by various Democrats and Republicans. (Boo, unless we can talk Strama into an amendment that would let ballot qualified parties like the TXLP to also select a member of the committee.)

Contact Pat Dixon or me if you want to join our Austin-based team. If you are not in or around Austin, you can still help us out with bill tracking. It is easier than ever. Just visit the Texas Legislature Online site and start searching. (A tip: use the advanced search option and choose subjects of interest from the list they provide.) Send me an email at atrock@rockhoward.com if you find a bill worth tracking because the TXLP should clearly support or oppose it.



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Submissions of party news, meeting minutes, photographs, suggested web sites, letters to the editor, etc. are encouraged. Please send to Laura@libertyworks.org or to bcunningham2@verizon.net to submit.

Libertarian activists who are interested in volunteering as reporters, editors, columnists, etc. can join our working group at Lonestarliberty@yahoo.com.

Flop Nob?...Lessons Learned

By John Shuey

As part of their election campaign efforts, several Libertarian candidates participated in Dallas' first *HobNob* event.

Reportedly highly successful in other areas, *HobNob* is designed to bring together candidates and interested citizens, providing both an opportunity for a degree of personal interaction that is not generally available in many other venues.

Unfortunately Dallas *HobNob* was a flop. Most candidates skipped the event, and voter participation was virtually non-existent.

My purpose here is not to be critical of *HobNob*, but rather to define what went wrong and what lessons future LP campaigns can take from it. From discussions with participants, it seems that the biggest problems were:

- Attendance projections by the promoters were based on figures from cities where *HobNob* was an established tradition. 5,000 attendees were projected, approximately 75 actually showed up. Candidates outnumbered voters.

- Attendees were charged an admission fee. How many people want to pay to talk to a politician?

- Promotion for the event was almost non-existent. Reports are that ads were run on only one radio station, and only for the week leading up to the event. Possibly this was due to the inability of the event planners to attract sponsors. (No sponsors are listed on their website.)

- Many candidates...especially from major parties...skipped the event. At \$250 and up for candidate participation, many LP candidates were priced out, but the no-shows among the major parties are another thing. Perhaps they knew something? Likewise few Public Interest Groups attended.

In light of these facts, the lessons become obvious.

- Events such as *HobNob*, especially those with steep fees for candidates, must be thoroughly investigated and analyzed before we participate.

- We need to make sure promoters of such events have a complete and logical marketing plan designed to produce attendance.

Our attitude needs to be that we are not paying for the privilege of being there, but for the opportunity to meet and interact with a reasonably large number of potential voters. We might even try to get a guarantee of minimum attendance.

- It would not hurt to ask what sponsors have signed on, and what the advertising and marketing budgets are.

- Another good question to ask would be "How many of my constituents specifically are going to be there". You wouldn't pay to mail your brochures to a town outside of your district, why pay to meet folks who can't vote for you? You need to meet 5,000 constituents, not 5,000 random attendees.

- Are major party candidates attending? Since they are more readily recognized than most Libertarian candidates, they tend to draw more voters (Voters we have to convert), especially those candidates for higher office like Governor and U.S. Senate.

- Are there competing events that might diminish attendance? In this case there was a "big" (for some folks) football game.

- Can I get a bigger bang spending my \$250 (or whatever) on something else?

As candidates we tend to be enthusiastic and optimistic when, in fact, we might be better served by a more cynical, tight-fisted approach to campaign planning and spending.

Might *HobNob* eventually succeed in Dallas? It seems to work in other places. But how great a bang it provides for the candidate's investment in time and dollars is a very different question.

Matthew Mosely, Judy Baker, and Tim Lesbach contributed to this article.

North Texas LP News

Denton County – Rob Vigus has resigned as Chairman of the Denton County LP. Vice Chair James Gholston will serve as the interim Chairman. Other members of the County Executive Committee are Dan Rose (Secretary), John Shuey (interim Treasurer following the resignation from that position by David Croft), David Croft, and past Chair Mike Ellsberry.

Why I am a Libertarian

Reprinted from Austin Liberator

Back before the 2004 election season, the Austin American-Statesman gave some space to Patrick Dixon (present state chair of the Libertarian Party of Texas and Lago Vista City Councilman) to describe the Libertarian point of view. You can read his editorial (written with Wes Benedict) in this past issue of the Austin Liberator.

Before the text was finalized, several local Libertarians exchanged ideas as to what the editorial might say. Here is what I sent in:

If you're in the habit of reading the news, you have probably run into the following stories. National news: Gay marriage. Health care. Deficits. Jobs going overseas. Pre-emptive war. Texas news: Redistricting. School finance. Central Texas news: Toll roads. Racial profiling. Hospital districts. Big-box retailers.

The common thread running through all these stories is...government. What is the government doing or not doing about the issue? What should the government do about the issue? What does this or that politician or candidate feel about the issue?

Government decisions and actions dominate the news. Government decisions and actions dominate issues affecting all our lives.

Because the role of government at all levels has become so dominant, the control of that massive power has become highly important. But the concentration of power in government is the PRIMARY reason for conflict among groups of people in our country. We fall into a trap of thinking, "If we could just elect the right people, we could get the right programs enacted." Government has the ability to force compliance and we desire to have this power to make others do what we want. People in other societal groups then become our enemies, as they try to elect their people to enact their programs.

When I finally realized this simple fact—that it is government power that sets groups in society against one another—I decided I really was a libertarian.

In a more libertarian world, government decisions would occupy a very small part of

our consciousness each day. Government actions might take up only a page or two in our daily newspaper. Libertarians are the only ones who work to have government do less, be less dominant, cause less strife and conflict.

A writer in Minnesota, Bob Smith, has come up with the most succinct expression of the libertarian idea that I have ever seen: "No force, no fraud." My interpretation: We should not force others to do what we want and we should keep promises we make. Government's proper role is to make sure we follow these two simple rules.

P.J. O'Rourke put it this way: "Mind your own business. Keep your hands to yourself."

Thomas Jefferson said, "...a wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government."

I hope to see a world for our children which is free from the inter-group conflict that government power breeds – and that's why I'm a Libertarian.

Many of you may recognize the above as something of a restatement of what Harry Browne said much more eloquently in his book *Why Government Doesn't Work*.

If there are Liberator readers who would like to compose reasonably brief explanations of how they became interested in the ideas of liberty, I would consider publishing them here. No promises, though. Send to cattledriver2002@yahoo.com

Kevin Tunstall to Speak at January's Libertarian Party of Bexar County Meeting

Rose Shea has confirmed that Kevin Tunstall will speak at the Libertarian Party of Bexar County meeting on Tuesday, January 16. His topic will be "Elections: Campaigns, Strategy and Analysis".

Kevin Tunstall is the Fort Bend County LP Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Libertarian Party of Texas. He was also Campaign Manager for Bob Smither, who was our candidate in District 22.

Events

15 December 2006 Harris County Libertarian Party Bill of Rights Dinner and Discussion, Ninfa's Restaurant, 8553 Gulf Freeway (at Monroe), 7:00-9:30pm

19 December 2006 Bexar County Libertarian Party Business Meeting, 7:00 PM, Unlimited Thought Bookstore, 5525 Blanco, Suite 107. Ray Aleman: America's War on People: Victims of Drug Prohibition

13 January 2007 SLEC Meeting, Austin, Texas

16 January 2007 Bexar County LP General Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

20 February 2007 Bexar County LP General Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

20 March 2007 Bexar County LP Business Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

17 April 2007 Bexar County LP General Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

15 May 2007 Bexar County LP General Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

19 June 2007 Bexar County LP Business Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

17 July 2007 Bexar County LP General Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

21 August 2007 Bexar County LP General Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

18 September 2007 Bexar County LP Business Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

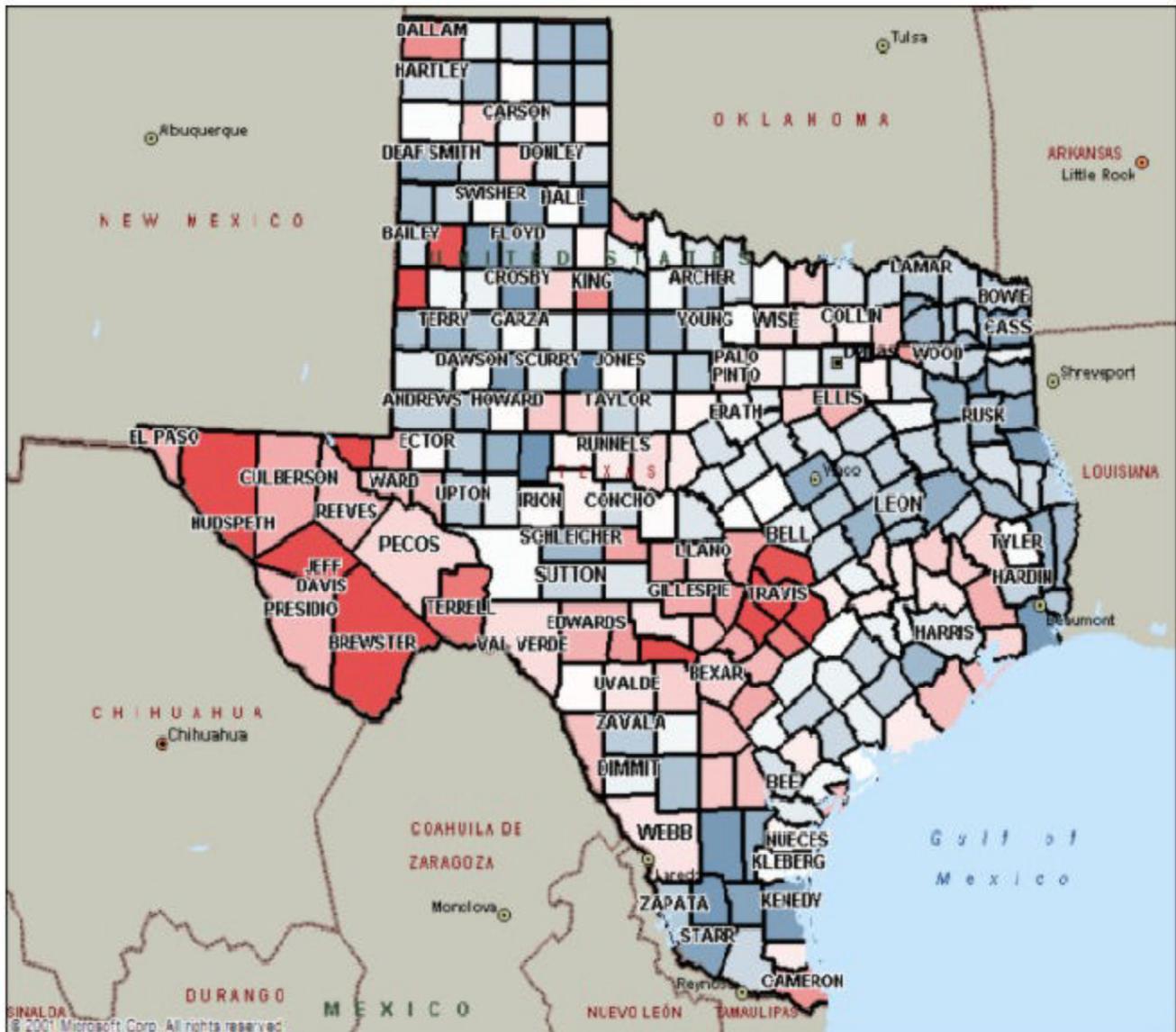
16 October 2007 Bexar County LP General Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

20 November 2007 Bexar County LP General Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

18 December 2007 Bexar County LP Business Meeting, 7:00 PM, Location to be announced.

Libertarians Results in 2006 Elections

Libertarian results. Average of all state-wide 3-way races plus governor. Red is 5% or greater. White in the middle. Blue is 1.5%. Shades of red and blue are in between.



DONATE and/or ORDER MORE MATERIALS 2006-09

Help us reach our **STRETCH** goal of 250,000 door hangers placed throughout Texas. \$100 will help us pay for 2000 more door hangers!

Enclosed is a **one-time donation** for you to put to use immediately for our November 2006 outreach efforts:

[] \$1,000 [] \$500 [] \$250 [] \$100
 [] \$50 [] \$25 [] Other \$ _____

__ Visa __ MC __ AmEx __ Disc Card Number: _____

Name as it appears on card: _____

Expiration Date: _____ Signature: _____

Please make checks payable to the "Libertarian Party of Texas."

State law requires us to report the occupation of any individual who contributes more than \$50 in a reporting period. Employer optional. Political contributions are not tax deductible. No corporate contributions.

Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

Materials are FREE! We need donors and volunteers. Some of you are both:

	<p>Door hangers</p> <p>If you've already put up 200, consider ordering 400 this time.</p> <p>[] 200 (for beginners) [] 400 [] Other _____</p>	 <p>Yard signs Qty ____ (10 max)</p>	 <p>Bumper stickers Qty ____ (20 max)</p>
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Donors of \$50 or more please do exceed our suggested maximum quantities for materials!

Your contact information:

Name:
 Mr/Ms/Dr _____ First _____ Middle _____

Last _____ Suffix _____ Nickname _____

Address:
 Street _____ Add2/Apt _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ County _____

Phone:
 Home _____ Home 2 _____

Work _____ Cell _____

E-mail (print clearly): _____

Occupation: _____

For additional information, please contact our Executive Director, Wes Benedict, at (512) 442-4910, 8:00 am - 10:00 pm, 7 days a week (Director@LPTexas.org).

Please return in the enclosed envelope today!

Mail to: Libertarian Party of Texas, PO Box 41059, Austin, TX 78704. Fax to: 512-233-0613