



THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

Watergate Office Building ♦ 2600 Virginia Avenue, NW, Suite 100 ♦ Washington, DC 20037

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For additional information

Bill Winter, Director of Communications

(202) 333-0008 ★ 73163.3063@CompuServe.com

Libertarian leaders learn “political judo” at Washington, DC campaign seminar

Older party’s weaknesses are good news for 1996

WASHINGTON, DC -- Top Libertarian Party leaders attended a campaign training seminar this weekend in the heart of Washington, DC to learn “political judo” -- how to use the political strategies and tactics of Republicans and Democrats to beat them in 1996.

“We’re arming ourselves with the weapons of our opponents,” said Steve Dasbach, national chairman of the Libertarian Party. “The 1,000 candidates we’ll run for office this year will use this knowledge to conduct more successful and winnable campaigns.”

Dasbach said the party and its candidates are adopting increasingly sophisticated techniques of fundraising, voter outreach, and issues selection -- formerly the sole province of the older parties. “We used these strategies to win two important city council races in Georgia last year,” he said. “Now, we will disseminate them to all our candidates.”

But even better than the nuts-and-bolts political lessons, said Dasbach, were the good news/bad news revelations Libertarians heard at the *Campaigns & Elections* magazine-sponsored seminar, held March 1-3.

“Good news for us, bad news for Republicans and Democrats,” he said. “Leading consultants for the two older parties had to admit how unhappy Americans are with the job their clients are doing. They also revealed many of the weaknesses we will be able to exploit in 1996.” For example:

■ **Supporters of the two older parties are dying off.**

Dan Morgan, chief fundraiser for the Bob Dole for President campaign, admitted that the

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average Dole contributor is in his 70s. "He said they have to constantly replenish their donor list to make up for the people who are dying," said Dasbach.

■ **Voters don't trust the Republicans and Democrats** -- and, surprisingly, trust them even less when they collaborate.

Campaign consultant Mark Mellman, who ran the campaigns of two dozen Democratic Senate, U.S. House, and gubernatorial candidates, said, "People are now no more enamored with the Democratic Party, and are a lot less enamored with the Republican Party."

And Ed Goeas, former political director of the Republican National Congressional Committee, cited a poll showing that 57% of Americans believe that when Republicans and Democrats agree on something, it is bad for the public.

"People prefer gridlock to the corrupt and dangerous deals that the Republican and Democratic politicians make," said Dasbach.

■ **The older party politicians have created a climate of cynicism among voters.**

Republican Ed Goeas quoted a poll revealing that a two-to-one majority of Americans think it's more likely that a cure for cancer will be found than that the federal budget will be balanced within the next 20 years.

And Democrat Mark Mellman noted that 49% of Americans think special interests control the political process.

■ **Finally, there was across-the-board agreement that old political rules no longer apply in 1996** -- "creating a unique opportunity for a nationally organized third party like the Libertarian Party," said Dasbach.

Bill Kristol, publisher of the conservative *Weekly Standard*, said, "We are in a new era of politics. And the rules of the new political era haven't settled into place yet."

"The Republican and Democratic parties are the dinosaurs from that old era of American politics. And the Libertarian Party is the future," said Dasbach.

The Libertarian Party expects to be on the ballot in all 50 states again in 1996, and plans to field candidates for more than 1,000 local, state, and federal offices. The party also hopes to run more than 218 Congressional candidates, making it the first third party in 80 years to contest a majority of U.S. House seats.

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