

LIBERTY PLEDGE

newsletter

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

NOVEMBER 2000

Harry Browne wins 376,000 votes

Lower than expected vote total is blamed on razor-tight race

In what may turn out to be the closest election in U.S. history, Libertarian Party presidential candidate Harry Browne has apparently won just over 376,000 votes.

With more than 99% of the precincts reporting as of mid-November — but with more than a million absentee ballots still to be counted — Browne and VP candidate Art Olivier won 376,123 votes, or 0.4%, according to the Associated Press.

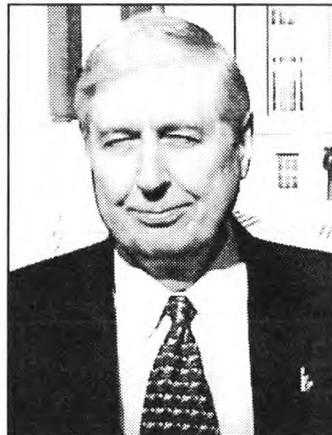
Browne won about 100,000 fewer votes than he had in 1996 — and only about one-half of what pre-election polls had been

predicting. Browne had been showing up at 0.6% to 0.8% in the Zogby and Rasmussen polls just one day before the election.

The razor-tight contest between Bush and Gore almost certainly cost the LP votes, said Browne campaign manager Perry Willis.

“The apparent closeness of the race could easily have cost us a few hundred thousand votes,” he said.

Around the country, Browne did best in Georgia, where he won 1.4% of the vote, Alaska (0.9%), Indiana (0.7%), Wyoming (0.7%), Colorado (0.7%), Idaho (0.7%), Massachusetts (0.6%), and



■ Browne: Vote totals were off from pre-election polls.

Virginia (0.6%). Browne won 0.5% in Maine, New Hampshire, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, and Washington state.

Browne's 376,000 votes were more than the 100,000-200,000 votes that divided

Bush and Gore — and marked the first time an LP presidential candidate was more than the margin of difference in an election.

“Of course, we were the margin of difference because the race was so close,” said LP National Director Steve Dasbach. “But it is a historic first for us to have helped determine the outcome of a presidential election.”

Browne finished in fifth place in the presidential contest, about 64,000 votes behind Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan, who won 439,040 votes. However, Browne finished ahead of Buchanan in 18 states.

The Green Party's Ralph Nader came up well short in his bid for 5% of the vote — and the federal campaign money that would have followed. Nader won 2.7%.

As a result, both the Reform and Green parties “are likely to have passed their high-water marks,” said Willis — and the Libertarian Party may be the only “major” minor party left standing for the 2004 election.

“There could be fewer third parties in 2004,” he said. “It's even possible we could have the field to ourselves.”

Other third parties fared even worse: Howard Phillips of the Constitution Party won 98,611 votes, while John Hagelin of the Natural Law Party won 88,319 votes.

25 Libertarians elected to local office

At least 25 Libertarian Party candidate were victorious in Election 2000 — more than for any other alternative party.

LP candidates won in Florida (3 victories), Alabama (2), Michigan (2), Texas (4), Arizona (1), and California (13).

The only other third party reporting any victories was the Green Party, with 18.

In high-profile LP races around the country, Carla Howell won about 12% for

U.S. Senate in Massachusetts — one percentage point behind the Republican. It was the highest percentage that any LP candidate for U.S. Senate has received in party history.

In Nevada, James Dan came up just short in his race for State Assembly (District 28), winning 45% in a two-way race against the Democratic incumbent.

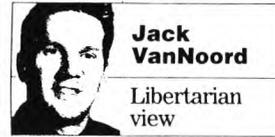
In the area of ballot access, the party “held its

own,” coming out of the election with ballot status in 25 states.

And LP candidates for U.S. House won a combined 1.66 million votes — the largest cumulative vote total ever by third-party Congressional candidates.

“There has never been a minor party that ever got even a million votes for U.S. House,” said Richard Winger, publisher of *Ballot Access News*. “It's stunning.”

edge **WORD**



Jack VanNoord
Libertarian view

Picking between Bush and Gore no choice at all

Left. Right. Liberal. Conservative. We spend a lot of time trying to convince ourselves that a difference exists between the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates. But once we get past the labels and the rhetoric, the differences evaporate.

I am not the only one who seems to be having trouble distinguishing between the two. Did you notice that during the presidential debates, moderator Jim Lehrer had to repeatedly ask the candidates to clarify the differences between their positions on the issues?

Their responses to the Middle East crisis were so similar that Lehrer had to ask: "Is there any difference?"

Later, Lehrer asked "Back to the question about the differences on gun control. What are they, governor, from your point of view?"

Both candidates want to add a prescription drug plan to the already disastrous Medicare program. Bush wants to enlarge welfare by giving your money to private charities of his choice. Gore is proposing a new preschool program. Both candidates have been conspicuously silent on the failure of the insane "war on drugs." Both want to expand the Department of Education.

Despite all their talk about limited government, both are big-spending politicians. Bush enlarged the budget in Texas. Gore was named the No. 1 big spender in the Senate by the National Taxpayers Union. Neither has ever done a single thing to get government out of our lives. And neither one is proposing anything specific to do so now.

Fortunately, an alternative exists. A candidate is running for president who is not trying to expand — or even reform — failed federal programs. This candidate recognizes that government intervention into our lives is the problem, not the solution. That candidate is Libertarian Harry Browne.

While the other two candidates wax poetic about reducing federal government, Harry Browne is the only candidate determined to restore limited, constitutional government. Libertarians don't pretend to know what is best for you, me and 270 million other Americans.

"I want you to be free of the income tax by making government so small there's no need for an income tax," Harry Browne has said. "I want you to be released from Social Security immediately and completely. I want to end the insane war on drugs that is tearing our cities apart with violence and serving as an excuse to deny every American citizen the Bill of Rights."

Libertarians want to get the federal government out of every area where it has such a mess: health care, education, welfare, foreign aid, corporate welfare, highway boondoggles, farm subsidies. Not only are these programs unconstitutional, they do tremendous damage to our lives.

Libertarians want you to be free to live your life as you want to live it — not as Al Gore or George Bush wants you to.

What do you want in a president? If you believe government is too big, too expensive, too intrusive and too oppressive, then you are making a mistake by voting for either major-party candidate.

You can't make government smaller by rewarding those who make government bigger. If you vote for Gore or Bush, your vote will be interpreted as an endorsement of every big-government proposal your candidate has made. Neither one will reverse the trend toward bigger government. But a vote for Libertarian candidates is a vote for smaller government.

Everyone of us has a choice to make. We can vote for politics-as-usual or we can begin to take back our lives from those who would rule over us. For once, vote for yourself instead of a politician. Vote for freedom.

You can't make government smaller by rewarding those who make government bigger.

I'm convinced that computers turn their users into Libertarians. Sure, computer users may think they're Democrats or Republicans, Liberals or Conservatives, but Libertarian is the label that fits best. Just look at the polls on the Internet compared to those run nationwide by CNN and *USA Today*, which include the computer-excluded. There is no correlation between the two. Eighty to 90 percent of those responding to Internet polls are anti-government involvement in everything. They want to figure it out themselves, do it themselves and, often, do it by themselves. They say, "Let me keep my money and my vices! After all, they're mine!" This is the essence of being a true Libertarian.

Conservatives and Republicans tend to say, "You can keep your money, but you must give up your vices." Liberals and Democrats tend to say, "You can keep your vices, but it's going to cost you money." For Libertarians it comes down to an issue of control. Who's in control of the money and who's in control of the vices? This is where the computer becomes a dominant influence.

The computer is an instrument of power. With my computer, I can compete with even the largest of companies. I can market to millions over the Internet. I can lobby all of Washington, D.C., without ever leaving my bedroom. I can meet thousands of people from all over the world who think the same way I do. (Those are highly intelligent people.) I don't want the government messing with my computer power, my money or my vices. That's Libertarian.

Computers have an insidious way of affecting your point of view. Though a mere machine (unlike a toaster), a computer quickly becomes a companion (more like a car). Life becomes a little easier and a little faster. Phrases like, "Let me check it out on my computer!" or, "Let's search the Web!" become commonplace. You start feeling a sense of control.

The more power people feel they have over their lives, the less they feel the need for assistance from some outside source. Computers make people feel more capable (once we get over our feeling of incompetence), slowly pushing them toward self-confidence and self-reliance. The more elements of their life they control, the more they want to control. The Libertarian motto, "Don't Tell Me What to Do!" becomes their mantra. This is the anarchy technology has brought.

Is this good or bad? I don't know.

I don't like the constant government hand in my pocket and the attitude that the money I earn belongs to our massive bureaucracy. Nor do I want anyone to tell me how to live my life (except my wife). Maybe I'll hit the Web and send a letter to my congressman . . . or all the congressmen and women. Or, I could spend the next week of my life playing the latest computer game saga. I wonder what my grasshopper collection would be worth on eBay?

The best protection against this creeping Libertarianism is to avoid computers at all costs. Without the power at your fingertips, you will be free to feel helpless and look hopefully to "them what know." If "them what know" are kind, caring and "feel your pain," they may just institute a government takeover of your life. Whatever you do, don't push your kid out of the way and start using that computer.

Jack Dunning, Publisher
letters@computoredge.com

▲ *ComputerEdge*, San Diego, California, October 13, 2000

► *Buffalo Grove Daily Herald*, Buffalo Grove, IL, October 25, 2000

Political Circuit

BRIAN C. MOONEY

Senate-race debate would have been no-win situation

Senator Edward M. Kennedy has decided he won't debate any of his challengers. To fill this void, we've imagined what it would be like if he actually faced Republican Jack E. Robinson and Libertarian Carla Howell in a televised exchange.

It might go something like this. Moderator: Thank you, Senator Kennedy, for surrendering an hour of your incredibly busy and important life to be with us tonight. Of course, we, in the Boston news media, did not push you to do this, you understand that, right? But we are so honored by your presence.

Kennedy: Ah... um, you're very welcome. You know, ah... ahem, after, ah, what is it now, 38 years in the Senate, I figured I deserved... um... ah... at least one bye in an election year. I guess

... er... this is close enough.

Robinson: You can run, Teddy boy, like you did at Chappaquiddick, but you can't hide from me. I've got you now.

Howell: Excuse me, but can we talk about issues? I'd like to talk about the virtues of small government.

Robinson: Small government? You mean, no government, don't you? If you had your way, we'd all be living like "Little House on the Prairie," home-schooling our kids and cleaning the rifle.

Moderator: Mr. Robinson, please.

Robinson: No, really. I'm for less government, but she's way out there. There she is, in her tailored suit, looking like a proper suburbanite, but she's a radical who wants to dismantle the government. For the record, I'm the official nominee of the Republican

Party, and that's a real party, honey.

Kennedy: Ah, and a fine example of where the party's headed in this, er... um, Common-... ah, Commonwealth.

Robinson: Zip it, Mr. Member of the Old White Men's Club.

Moderator: That's enough of that, Mr. Robinson. Now, Mr. Robinson, why is it that the leaders of your own party have shunned you in this campaign?

Kennedy: That's, um, fairly obvious, ah... isn't it?

Robinson: Hey, I've got two words for you, pal — Dike Bridge. Put that in your shot glass and drink it.

Moderator: Answer the question, please.

Robinson: OK, I will. Why? Governor Cellucci and his gang took a dive. They didn't want to upset His Royal Highness over

there when the oatmeal hit the fan over the Big Dig costs. They needed a friend in Washington to protect the dough.

Moderator: Senator Kennedy. Please forgive me, but I must ask you this... a question that all Massachusetts residents have been waiting for years for you to answer. Can you tell us about all the incredibly important things you've done for your constituents, your country, indeed, the world, during your unbelievably distinguished and productive tenure in the Senate?

Kennedy: Well, I'm, um, there's been a whole book written about my achievements. All that's been written about what Mr., um, Robinson's done, is in traffic citations or, ah, a restraining order. I'm, the, ah, Senate's foremost advocate for universal health care, um, the retarded, a great, ahem,

defender of senior citizens, a champion of, oh, of opportunity for all Americans, regardless of their... ah... backgrounds.

Robinson: That's a reference to me, a black man, isn't it, Teddy? If I was a rich, white candidate like that pretty boy, Mitt Romney, we'd've debated three times, now, wouldn't we?

Howell: Can I get a word in edgewise here? I'd like to discuss our government's oppressive regulations concerning the rights of gun owners, in violation of the Second Amendment.

Robinson: Roger that, sweetheart. You may look like Betty Crocker, but you've got a few rounds there in the ammo clip. Too bad you're from the Liberian, or Librarian, or Liberate party. Or whatever it is.

Howell: Mr. Robinson — may I call you Jack E.? Our numbers are

growing. More people are concerned about government intrusions into their daily lives, an erosion of their freedom.

Kennedy: Ah, Ms. Howell, I, um, ah, disagree. My whole life, ah, has been, er... ah, dedicated, to the proposition that... ahem, government... can, oh, do just about, um, anything.

Robinson: Hahahahahahaha. That's a good one. I became a millionaire without any help from the government, old man.

Kennedy: That's very hard to, um, believe, but, er, what, ah; a stirring testa-, ah, testament it is, to what a, a, a, great country we, um, live in.

Robinson: I'll tell you what's great, Teddy Bear. I'm the Republican Party nominee, and this is my 15 minutes of fame.

Moderator: Yes it is, Mr. Robinson, and now, your time is up.

Browne, Hagelin and Phillips chide other candidates for being absent

WASHINGTON (AP) — With four empty lecterns bearing the names of Bush, Gore, Nader and Buchanan, a presidential debate Friday night was more about who wasn't there than who was.

Of the seven candidates invited, only three attended: Libertarian Party candidate Harry Browne, Natural Law Party candidate John Hagelin and Constitution Party candidate Howard Phillips.

Vice President Al Gore had agreed to participate in the debate on governmental ethics, sponsored by Judicial Watch, but withdrew after his camp reached an agreement with Texas Gov. George W. Bush for three presidential commission debates. Bush never accepted.

"The invitation was extended to the candidates before they met and discussed the presidential commission debates," said Gore campaign spokeswoman Jano Cabrera.

Green Party candidate Ralph Nader and Reform Party nominee Pat Buchanan declined to participate after learning Gore would not be there, Judicial Watch officials said.

But that didn't deter the other third-party candidates,

who arguably are vying for fourth, fifth or even sixth place in the presidential election. The absent candidates — especially Bush and Gore — were the target of those who were there.

Hagelin said important governmental reforms such as women's voting rights, child labor laws and the abolition of slavery only have been accomplished through the third-party candidates. Those candidates did not win, but created a movement that spurred change in the two-party system. "Reforms will have to come from two candidates not marinated in oil," Hagelin said.

Browne tried to counter voters' concerns about throwing away their votes by backing a third-party candidate. He said Americans should vote for a candidate who will reduce the government, not "the person who will take me to hell at the slowest possible rate."

Phillips got the only standing ovation of the night when he passionately denounced abortion and pledged to appoint Supreme Court justices who would ban it. "Republicans appointed seven out of nine justices," he said. "Apparently they think they need nine

out of nine to stop abortion."

But Hagelin said he supports a woman's right to choose — not the government's.

"That decision should be made and left to us — a woman, her doctor and her family," he said.

All three said they would not support renewal of the law creating the independent counsel, saying partisanship has rendered it ineffective.

Browne said government should not be used as "an agent of morality." Phillips shot back: "I want to assure Harry that Bill Clinton and Al Gore have taken his advice — morality is not in government."

To some who attended, the debate was refreshing.

"They weren't wishy-washy," said Geneva Hopper, 43, of Joppa, Md. "They didn't say just what you wanted to hear."

But Hopper, who owns a roofing business with her husband and home-schools her children, said she will vote for Bush because supporting one of the third-party candidates "is almost like a Perot vote, a wasted vote," she said, referring to Reform Party founder Ross Perot

▲ *The Boston Globe*
Boston, Massachusetts
October 28, 2000

◀ *The Mercury-Register*
Oroville, California
October 21, 2000

▼ *The Register-Guard*
Eugene, Oregon
November 4, 2000

Libertarian gains: Libertarian Party candidate Harry Browne is on the presidential ballot in 49 states — all but Arizona — and he has quietly built a following that is actually registering in national polls. The MSNBC-Reuters-Zogby daily tracking poll shows Browne tied with Pat Buchanan at 1 percent, and some polls show Browne pulling ahead. And in some states, such as Texas and Colorado, the Libertarians are fielding more candidates for local offices this year than the Democratic Party. The Libertarian message is simple — get government out of our lives. Libertarians also advocate legalizing drugs to eliminate the profit motive.

REGULATION

Pay more, wash less

► *The Florida Times-Union*
Jacksonville, Florida
October 26, 2000

▼ *The Boston Globe*
Boston, Massachusetts
October 29, 2000

It was bad enough when the federal government, seeking to conserve water, banned sales of traditional 3.5-gallon toilet tanks in favor of 1.6-gallon models. That wasn't enough water, so many Americans adopted the "flush early, flush often" strategy to avoid problems.

Next, the government mandated that manufacturers cut energy use in washing machines by 22 percent. As the popular top-loading models are sold, they are now being replaced on showroom floors with front-loading machines.

These "environmentally friendly"

washers are not budget friendly. They cost about \$500 — \$200 more than the old top-loaders. They also don't wash as well, take longer and can't be opened during the wash cycle.

Consumers still will be able to buy top-loading models, of course. But they will cost about \$1,100. People probably will be hanging onto their old washers a little longer.

As a Libertarian Party spokesman aptly put it, the federal government is "dumping an extra-dirty load of regulations on Americans, rinsing the money out of our wallets and hanging consumers out to dry."

CATHY YOUNG

Are libertarian ideas catching on?

IN THE LAST century, the principles of individual liberty and small government were often declared dead and obsolete. Yet as the new millennium begins, these ideals still have powerful appeal.

While some — including Al Gore — would give the government credit for our unprecedented prosperity, most Americans remain skeptical. A recent Washington Post/ABC News poll found that 60 percent would rather have a smaller government with fewer services than a bigger government with more services. (While men are more likely to take this view, it is endorsed by more than half of women.)

In Pew Research Center surveys, more than two-thirds agree that government is nearly always wasteful and inefficient. Proposals that would give less control to the government and more to individuals, from school vouchers to Social Security privatization, enjoy growing support.

Are we wrong to mistrust the state? Much-touted big-government success stories, such as universal health care in Canada, often turn out to have a seamy side (long waiting lists for medical procedures, overcrowded hospitals, dangerously outdated medical equipment). Meanwhile, claims about the alleged perils of government down-

sizing often turn out to be spectacularly wrong.

Recently, many big-government apologists have blamed airline deregulation for turning air travel into a nightmare of crowded skies and endless flight delays. But the finger-pointing is in the wrong direction. Deregulation succeeded in making air fares low enough to be affordable for the average American, tripling the annual number of passengers since 1978. However, the government-run air traffic control system has not kept up with the higher volume of air traffic, and airport expansion has been stymied by bureaucratic red tape.

Unfortunately, neither of the major parties is a consistent champion of individual liberty. Carla Howell, the businesswoman who is running for the US Senate in Massachusetts on the Libertarian Party ticket and the slogan "Small government is beautiful," charges that Republicans and Democrats alike "support Big Government programs, high taxes, and more and more intrusions into our business and personal lives." She has a point.

Generally, it seems that liberal Democrats want the government out of our bedrooms and in our pocketbooks while conservative Republicans want the reverse. Liberals support the individual's right to

choose abortion or to live with a same-sex partner; conservatives support an individual's right to own a gun, or to choose at which school to spend the public money allocated for her children's education. And, of course, both Republicans and Democrats enthusiastically support the drug war, which has resulted in massive violations of civil liberties and long prison terms for thousands of men and women for minor victimless crimes.

The same conservatives who so often slam liberal politicians and judges for thwarting the will of the people applauded the Clinton administration's decision to thwart the will of voters in six states who approved the legalization of marijuana for medical use.

The Libertarian Party — which usually gets no more than half of 1 percent of the vote in presidential elections — has the virtue of being consistent in its defense of liberty: It wants the state to keep its hands off our wallets, our guns, and our bodies (including whatever substances we may choose to put in our bodies). Unfortunately, the Libertarians take these principles to utopian extremes, seeking less to limit government than to smash it. They support eventual repeal of all taxation and would eliminate even minimal health and safety regula-

tions, all government assistance to the poor, and public schools.

A libertarian streak, with a small "l," runs deep in American culture; we cherish our right to be left alone, and we know freedom entails risks. Still, only about one-tenth of Americans rate themselves as being on the far end of the libertarian scale when it comes to reducing the role of government, and even among this 10 percent, most would probably think the Libertarian Party platform is way off the scale.

Where does that leave voters who would like to see realistic prospects for reducing government involvement in our personal and economic lives? Are we stuck with only bad choices? There may be grounds for cautious optimism.

In the 2000 election, Republican campaign rhetoric has largely avoided themes of government-enforced moralism and focused on lower taxes, smaller government, individual choice, and personal empowerment.

This pro-freedom message seems to be working surprisingly well, even though the messenger can't articulate it with much eloquence or conviction and even though the Democratic candidate has the booming economy on his side. Maybe libertarianism with a small "l" is in ascendancy after all.

Cathy Young is a contributing editor at *Reason* magazine. Her column appears regularly in the *Globe*.