

NEWS RELEASE

THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

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87.1% of the American public agrees: Kick the politicians off the welfare wagon

Income tax check-off box shows: It's time to end tax-funded elections

WASHINGTON, DC — Here's what Americans think about taxpayer funding of political campaigns: *It stinks.*

In fact, they dislike it so much that a whopping 87% now refuse to contribute even \$3 a year to pay for federal funding of presidential elections, according to just-released figures, the Libertarian Party noted today.

"Politicians keep talking about tax-funded elections, but they never ask the American public what they want," said Steve Dasbach, the party's national chairman. "Well, in the one *real* vote that's taken place — where Americans get to vote with their dollars — it's a landslide, and an overwhelming majority want to kick politicians off the welfare wagon."

The Federal Election Commission announced last week that the number of Americans authorizing the subsidy through the income tax checkoff has plummeted to just 12.9%.

As a result, the agency, which doled out payments totaling \$236 million to political parties and candidates in 1996, warns that the fund may run out of money to pay candidates in the 2000 presidential primary campaign.

"Even though checking that box doesn't cost an individual any extra money — because the \$3 comes out of general government revenues — 87.1% of taxpayers refuse to participate," Dasbach said. "Can you imagine how many *more* people would refuse if that money was added directly to their tax bill?"

But even without that added burden, if current trends continue, fully 94% of Americans will refuse to check the box in 2000, said Dasbach — and no one will support the program by 2008.

"Pretty soon, the only supporters of this program will be the handful of presidential candidates who actually pocket the money," he said. "Even then, these political welfare queens will never get off the dole voluntarily, so we're going to have to push them off."

"Here's a Libertarian campaign finance reform proposal that 87% of Americans *already* agree with: End the taxpayer checkoff and let politicians fend for themselves in the marketplace of ideas. Allow every American to financially support whichever candidates they like. Consider it a welfare-to-work program for politicians," said Dasbach.

"Abolishing public financing would force politicians to pay for their campaigns the old-fashioned way: By *earning* the support of voters."

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