

# LP News



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## Standing against persecution

### ACLU of Michigan sues to stop demolition of Amish-owned homes

**M**ORENCI, Mich. — In December, the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan (ACLU) and the law firm Wright & Schulte, LLC, countersued the Lenawee County Health Department for violating the constitutional and civil rights of an Old Order Amish community by threatening to demol-

ish every Amish-owned home in the county, in effect expelling an entire faith community from its borders.

The Amish community, which lives in accordance with their religious beliefs by abstaining from using electricity, hydraulic power, running water, and other modern technology, faces expulsion from

Lenawee County as a result of lawsuits that local officials filed against them last month.

"The county is persecuting this Amish community because of their deeply held religious beliefs that have safely guided their way of life for generations," said Phil Mayor,

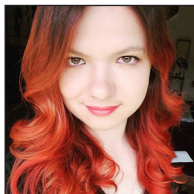
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## In defense of "pay to play": Why TANSTAAFL is not just a catchphrase

By Bekah Congdon

LPHQ Development Associate

**W**hen accusations of "pay to play" are thrown around, images of seedy backroom deals and corporate fat cats handing over briefcases of money in order to get a political favor tend to enter our minds. Whether it's special interest lobbyists paying for influence or candidates promising to forgive all student debt or give everyone free



Congdon

healthcare, there are certainly plenty of examples of the less-than-ethical power of money in politics.

What if we were to reclaim this phrase and turn it into something more useful? No doubt you have seen or heard plenty of declarations that the Libertarian Party would be more successful if they would just do this or that thing. "If only everyone would listen to me right now, things would start to improve." Perhaps you have found yourself saying something like this from time to time. It's easy to get caught up in the emotional shout fests that never end online, and often a solution seems so simple

when taken out of the context of reality. Sure, something may be a great idea — but if you aren't going to do it, who do you think is going to do it? And if someone is willing to put in the work, should there be no compensation? We like to remind people often that "there ain't no such thing as a free lunch." It is fair to contend that if that phrase is true about things people want their government to do, it is just as true for things you want your party to do.

Next time the opportunity arises to shout out a quick retort about why the Party of Principle hasn't made as many gains as you see reasonable,

stop and ask if your contributions match your expectations. When someone says that they could do a better job than a volunteer, ask them why they don't do it. Anyone truly wanting to see "a world set free in our lifetime" knows there is no limit to the things that can be accomplished — but someone has to do them, and someone has to pay for them. Imagine what more could be accomplished if every voice offering criticisms was also donating at least \$25 a month. If everyone who expressed frustration at not seeing enough Libertarians on their ballots sent a check to the ballot

*continued on page 4*

## CHAIR'S CORNER

# LP leads the way in 2020

**By Nicholas Sarwark**  
LNC Chair

It's an exciting time to be a member of the Libertarian Party. In a few short months, delegates from around the country will meet in Austin, Texas, to nominate a presidential ticket. There are a number of excellent candidates seeking the nomination, and we are on track to give every single American an opportunity to vote for the Libertarian candidate in November. Having 50-state ballot access in back-to-back elections is a great accomplishment that establishes us as one of only three truly national political parties.



Sarwark

The Libertarian Party has come a long way since my first election as chair in 2014. Our sustaining membership at the end of 2019 was the highest it's been for a non-election year since 2005. Our national headquarters, purchased in 2014 for just under a million dollars, is on track to be completely paid off this year. In addition to the presidential ticket, we are on track to recruit and run over 1,000 candidates across the United States. We have over 230 Libertarian elected officials around the country, with 75 of them winning in 2019.

None of this success would be possible without people like you getting involved and supporting the party and its candidates. When we work together to provide a voice for all of those Ameri-

cans who are politically engaged but disconnected from the two old parties and their tribal tactics, we get more done.

As we move forward through this election and beyond, it is important to maintain a culture of kindness and respect. That culture cannot be maintained through bylaws or rules — it has to be maintained through shared values. When we elevate and recognize those members of the party who are working to support candidates and build the organization, we strengthen those values. The corollary is that elevating those who spend their time attacking Libertarian candidates and activists, we weaken those values.

There are many different types of Libertarians. Some have conservative personal views. Some have liberal views. Some are most interested in economics. Some are most interested in civil liberties. Some have been in the Libertarian Party their whole lives. Some just found their political home last week.

All of them have come to this party because they share our vision for a world set free in our lifetime and want to put their time, money, and effort into making that a reality. We can disagree on issues, strategy and tactics, but we should not cross the line into personal attacks and campaigns to drive others out of the party.

The Libertarian Party candidates who are running in 2020, including our eventual presidential nominee, will be the only ones in their community giving voice to Americans who are concerned

about the big issues that will shape the future of the country.

They will be the only ones talking about our \$23 trillion national debt, our \$1 trillion annual deficit and the need to reduce government spending before we bankrupt our children and grandchildren.

They will be the only ones sharing a vision of an America at peace, bringing our sons and daughters back from fighting in other countries' civil wars and ending the racist war on drugs here at home.

They will be the only ones pushing for an open immigration policy, restoring America's place as a destination for hard-working immigrants to come to build a better future for their families and energize the American economy as well.

If you want to help us achieve success in 2020, please step up to run for office at [my.lp.org/run/](https://my.lp.org/run/), find a candidate to volunteer for at [my.lp.org/2020-candidates/](https://my.lp.org/2020-candidates/) and support the party financially at [lp.org/donate/](https://lp.org/donate/).

Yours in liberty,

Nicholas J. Sarwark

## LP News

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The Libertarian Party (LP) and its state affiliates work to advance the right of individuals to be free, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal rights of others.

The party runs candidates for public office, elects Libertarians, supports and opposes ballot measures, lobbies, and takes positions on public policy aimed at removing, reducing, and nullifying government laws, regulations, prohibitions, taxes, spending, debt, and foreign interventions.

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Thank You!

#KeepBanging



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## Amish (from page 1)

senior staff attorney with the ACLU of Michigan. "Lenawee County residents should be outraged that their local officials, using taxpayer money and in the county's name, have condemned their Amish neighbors' homes and are threatening to demolish their houses, and leave them homeless. They should contact their county commissioners and other local officials and implore them to end this vicious attack on the Amish religion."

The Amish community in Lenawee County adheres to their "old order" religious way of life by hand-pumping water from wells, using outhouses instead of flush toilets, and not using electricity, cell phones, or automobiles. Despite the fact that the Amish community's choice to live in traditional ways causes no harm to themselves or anyone else, the Lenawee County Health Department has condemned their homes, and is now asking a court to authorize the demolition of their property, unless the Amish community abandons its religious beliefs.

"This is not a question of public health — it's Lenawee County officials using religious discrimination



**The home of Joseph and Rosa Graber, clients of the ACLU of Michigan and Wright & Schulte, LLC, in Morenci, Mich.** Photo: ACLU of Michigan

as a tactic to run this Amish community out of their homes and destroy their way of life," said Richard Schulte, attorney with Wright & Schulte, LLC. "This community's commitment to live according to their religion harms no one."

After harassing the Amish community for years regarding its water supply and disposal, the county health department posted signs on the Amish families' homes earlier last

year condemning them as "unfit for human habitation" and filed lawsuits against 14 Amish families in November. If successful, the lawsuits would result in the demolition of the Amish families' homes and would effectively banish an entire religious community from Lenawee County. The ACLU and Wright & Schulte filed answers to those lawsuits in Lenawee County Circuit Court, which include counterclaims against the county for re-

ligious discrimination in violation of the federal and state constitutions and the federal Fair Housing Act.

Attorneys for the Amish include Dan Korobkin and Phil Mayor from the ACLU of Michigan, Richard Schulte and Stephen Behnke from Wright & Schulte, ACLU cooperating attorney John Shea, and attorney Jacob Bender. The case was referred to them by the Fair Housing Center of Southeast & Mid Michigan.

## Pay to Play (from page 1)

access fund, we would see substantial gains at the next election. Rather than despairing that the LP isn't taken seriously in a city or state, if we instead get serious about supporting our local and state affiliates we will start to see the very things we wish someone was doing. Think of it like making a call from a payphone (for those who remember those). You can say whatever you want — but if you

are expecting someone to be able to hear you on the other end, you need to drop a couple of coins in the slot first.

There is no need for alarm. Money is still not going to be able to buy influence in the LP. Every delegate from the largest donor to the newest bronze member still has the same route to convention and can add their voice to the platform debate or the

presidential nomination. Times are plentiful for many and times are lean for many others. Those who cannot reasonably contribute at this time are not the audience of this message. But for those who are not wanting financially, and who also earnestly want to see the day that we bring real liberty to our beautiful home, it is time to put some skin in the game. Nothing can be accomplished with-

out our donors, and there is nothing but gratitude felt for those whose contributions are keeping this party alive — even if they have criticisms from time to time. Being on the same team doesn't mean perfect harmony at all times; it does mean working together, in whatever way we can, to get things done.

Are you part of the team? Visit [lp.org/donate](http://lp.org/donate).





# Examining the facts about factionalism

By **Daniel Fishman**  
LNC Executive Director

One of the most poignant documents in our country's great history is Washington's farewell address. Most people know that Washington advised against political parties — but his specific words are impressive:



Fishman

"One of the expedients of party to acquire influence within particular districts is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heartburnings which spring from these misrepresentations; they tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection."

Washington delivered that in 1796. He actually had written a farewell address with James Madison at the end of his first term, but the bickering between Jefferson and Hamilton inspired him to serve another term because he felt that factionalism would lead to the destruction of the Union.

Fighting against that factionalism is one thing that inspires me on a daily basis. I truly believe that we are meant to be bound together voluntarily as Washington said. We are the participants in the noblest experiment in human evolution — the idea that we can govern ourselves.

The founders recognized how fragile an idea it was. Lincoln touches on it in the Gettysburg Address: "... that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

In our first hundred years, there really was a worry that tyranny would return — and the thing that saved us was the American character. The people who had come to the United States fleeing tyranny reminded us of how precious liberty is and how mindful we must be of the attempts

of some people to return us to a tyrannical rule.

Alexis de Tocqueville was the first to warn of a potential tyranny of the majority in the United States, but everyone who has lived with government recognizes what tyranny looks like. Frederick Jackson Turner's "Frontier Thesis" hypothesized that a critical element to the American character is that if you didn't like the tyranny of your local government, you could head west, and live as you chose. That ability to vote for real freedom with your feet has been exercised by Americans who went west and Americans who came to this country from the old world.

and Trump's cancellation of Republican primaries are not surprising to anyone who has followed politics recently.

The parties, having learned how to win elections by fracturing the electorate in order to gain control of the country with their small minority, are now themselves under the sway of people who are trying to fracture the party so that their small minority can gain control. Perez, Sen. Joe Biden and the old-guard Democrats struggle desperately to prevent the likes of Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez from gaining control. Democrats see how Trump rose to power in the GOP with just name

other. In fact, the end game of Libertarian politics is the end of politics as we know it. The politically powerful in the old parties raise their armies and gather their resources for a presidential campaign to exchange one set of rulers for another.

This contrast has never been so apparent or meaningful than in this presidential cycle. Regardless of who wins the Republican or Democratic nominations, the allegations of the party powerful choosing their favorite will stand in stark contrast to the assembled delegates of the Libertarian Party who, at the national convention in Austin, will vote their conscience.

And people voting their conscience is the ultimate expression of liberty.

Libertarians, therefore, have a unique mission. We represent the idea that we should be bound together through ideas, voluntarily, rather than bound together by debt and chains. We have to live that example and demonstrate that no political party can ever give them anything they need, without taking it from another. Government doesn't create wealth — only people can do that. Government doesn't create jobs — only people do that.

And government doesn't care for people — only we can do that.

Americans can't envision an end to factionalism. And Libertarians believe we are all factions of one. What we need to show is that factions can support the ideas they like, and ignore the ones they don't. Libertarians don't need to oppose each other. So long as one faction isn't hurting anyone else, we should step aside from the political games, and let the free market of ideas pick winners. Libertarian ideas compete with each other for support. We don't need to attack bad ideas — they will languish, while good ones will gather followers and succeed.

Positive factionalism — where groups of people support ideas, is the natural market. Negative factionalism — where we seek to destroy other ideas, is an implementation of authority.

**"The world we seek to build is one where individuals are free to follow their own dreams in their own ways, without interference from government or any authoritarian power."**

**LIBERTARIAN PARTY PLATFORM**  
Preamble

Learn more at [LP.org/platform](https://LP.org/platform)

**LIBERTARIAN**

Sadly, the old parties learned best that by fracturing the electorate, they can win by having the largest single group. And the thing that allies people most strongly is extremism. We have been hurtling down the road to this government based on election science learning that marginalizing people is the way to win elections. And both of the old parties happily engage in it. The parties grind up the electorate into political sausage to ensure that the resistance is not cohesive.

And now, the parties are turning the same grinding machine on themselves to ensure that they destroy resistance in their own parties. We see both Team Red and Team Blue breaking resistance in their parties. DNC Chairman Tom Perez's stacking of the deck against the progressives

recognition and all the free media air time he could ever want. In the party structure, however, power generates its own majority, and Trump used that power to solidify his majority while crushing all dissenters in his own party.

It has been said that the definition of an intellectual is one who can change their mind. The old parties, in their demand for unity of thought, are purging all the intellectuals by fracturing them into factions. Libertarians stand unique in the political firmament as the party that truly wants to unify people against oppression.

While Republicans and Democrats want to split the people to give power to a select few over all others, Libertarians want to make us all infinitely powerful to choose our own path, while powerless to control each

# Awards to be given out at LNC 2020

The following awards will be presented during the 2020 LP National Convention in Austin, Texas:

**Thomas Jefferson Leadership Award** — will be presented to the LP member whose achievements demonstrate outstanding leadership, impeccable character, and dedication to the principles and goals of the party.

**Patrick Henry Candidate Award** — will be presented to the LP member who has been a very effective candidate for public office at the state or federal level, while communicating Libertarian ideas, principles, and values. Nominees can be candidates in 2018 and thereafter.

**Benjamin Franklin Candidate Award** — will be presented to the LP member who has been a very effective candidate for public office at the local level, while communicating Libertarian ideas, principles, and values. Nominees can be candidates in 2018 and thereafter.

**Thomas Paine Communication Award** — will be presented to the LP member who has been an outstanding communicator of Libertarian ideas, principles, and values through written, published, or spoken communications.

**Samuel Adams Activism Award** — will be presented to the LP member who has been a very effective activist by building party membership, organizing community outreach, or communicating Libertarian principles.

**Hall of Liberty** — The Hall of Liberty, established in 2012, honors lifetime or significant achievement that has made a lasting impact on the Libertarian Party and/or libertarian movement. Induction into the Hall of Liberty requires a unanimous vote of the Awards Committee. (At most three people can be inducted at the national convention.)

## Submitting Nominations

Nominees for the Jefferson, Henry, Franklin, Paine, and Adams awards must be members of the Libertarian Party (i.e., they have signed the certification). Nominees for the Hall of Liberty need not be members of the Libertarian Party.

LP members should send nominations for these awards (along with supporting documentation) to the Awards Committee at Awards@LP.org. Nominations must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. EDT on Friday, April 10, 2020. Your nominations should include the following information (please be concise):

- Nominated for the \_\_\_\_\_ Award/Nominated for the Hall of Liberty
- The full name of the nominee, along with the nominee's address and email address. If possible, please provide the nominee's telephone number(s) and the number of years the nominee has been an LP member. (A photo of the nominee would be helpful.)
- A general paragraph describing the nominee and (where appropriate) the nominee's positions in the party, how you learned of his/her achievements, etc.
- A detailed list of the nominee's accomplishments that indicate the nominee is worthy of the award.

You are welcome to send links to videos about the nominee. You are also welcome to include the name(s) of people who support this nomination and to suggest people who should be considered to assist with the presentation of the award.

Please indicate whether you will attend the 2020 LP national convention.

## Previous award recipients and Hall of Liberty inductees

1996	Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award	Don Ernsberger Jacob Hornberger David Nolan
1998	Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award	Steve Dasbach Harry Browne David Bergland
2000	Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award	Richard Rider Michael Cloud Ed Clark
2002	Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award	Bruce Baechler Richard Pearl John Perry
2004	Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award	Jim Lark Mary Ruwart Ron Crickenberger
2006	Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award	Michael Badnarik John Stossel Harry Browne
2008	Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award	Bill Hall Mike Ferguson, Eric Schansberg Ruth Bennett, Jim Lark
2010	Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award	Michael Johnston, Kevin Knedler Rex Bell Bill Redpath
2012	Patrick Henry Award Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award Hall of Liberty	Lex Green, Travis Irvine Clyde Garland Jim Lark Sharon Harris Ed Clark, John Hospers, Roger MacBride, Tonie Nathan, David Nolan
2014	Patrick Henry Award Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award Hall of Liberty	Rupert Boneham, Robert Sarvis Hardy Macia Sharon Harris Patrick Dixon Harry Browne, Richard Winger
2016	Patrick Henry Award Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award Hall of Liberty	Will Hammer Wendy Adams Jason Scheurer BetteRose Ryan Ron Paul, Bill Redpath
2018	Benjamin Franklin Award Patrick Henry Award Samuel Adams Award Thomas Paine Award Thomas Jefferson Award Hall of Liberty	Jeff Hewitt Mark Miller Joe Johnson, Alicia Mattson Carla Howell Julie Fox Ruth Bennett, David Bergland, Ron Crickenberger, Jim Lark, John Perry



# Are you a Libertarian, or are you a Republican?

**By Bob Johnston**

LNC Staffer &  
LPMD State Chair

A month ago, a former Maryland Libertarian Party candidate called to let me know that he is going to run for the same race in 2020 as a Republican.

I thanked him for having the courtesy to let me know and asked him why he was planning on running as a Republican. He replied that he wanted to win.

I asked him why not run as a Democrat for that seat.

He sputtered incredulously, "Why would I do that?"

I said, "Because a Democrat has won that seat the last three elections, the last two by double digits."

After a pause, he replied, "Well, I have a better chance of getting elected to the seat as a Republican than as a Libertarian".

"True, but you still have much better shot getting elected as a Democrat". Nonetheless, he still couldn't fathom running as a Democrat.

The supposed affinity with the Republican Party is a problem the Libertarian Party has had for most of its history.

Part of the fault is on the Libertarian Party. For decades, the party has reached out mostly to disaffected conservatives, particularly on the issues of spending and gun rights. There has been a theme going around

for years that the LP is a bunch of conservatives who like to smoke pot. In 2016, many Libertarians tried to position the party as one for "Never Trumpers." Well, the Republican Party has sucked for a long time prior to Donald Trump getting elected president. The LP has done a poor job of reaching out to those who are anti-war, for civil liberties, against corporate welfare and for immigration. Further, former Libertarians running as Republicans give the GOP libertarians credibility they don't deserve.

The other part of the problem is that Republican candidates love using libertarian rhetoric when running for office. Never mind that they never deliver. In 2000, Bill Clinton's last year as president, the budget was \$2 trillion and the debt around \$5.5 trillion. The budget is now \$4.4 trillion and the debt reaching \$23 trillion, with a majority of the spending since the Clinton Administration written and passed by Republican-controlled US House members. They have been fully behind our aggressive foreign policy, where we have been mired in the Middle East for 16 years with no end in sight — a war that has cost over a trillion dollars, thousands of deaths and massive environmental destruction. Going back to Nixon, they have enforced the War on Drugs which has locked up countless non-violent people and ruined their lives.

Some libertarian-ish people have been elected to Congress as Repub-

licans, such as Rand Paul, Thomas Massie and Justin Amash. Rand Paul has come out and said he isn't a libertarian, rather a "constitutional conservative." While he has tried to push the Republican Party to limit our presence in our foreign wars and pushed for some changes to civil liberties, he is a full supporter of Donald Trump and has backed some of Trump's un-libertarian legislation and appointments, such as Mike Pompeo. He recently tried to get the Republicans in Congress to pass a budget that would cut a whopping two percent in spending. He got no takers. And Amash was run out of the Republican Party for speaking out about Trump. Paul, Massie and Amash have had to fight their own party as much as they have the Democrats, and they haven't made the Republican Party any more libertarian than it was prior to their getting elected.

When Rand's father, Ron Paul, decided to run for Congress again in 1996 after being away for eight years, the GOP did everything they could to prevent him from getting reelected. They backed former Democrat-turned-Republican Greg Laughlin against Dr. Paul since the district was strongly Republican and the winner of the Republican primary would most likely win the general election. Then-Texas Gov. George W. Bush, along with his father, former President George H. W. Bush,

both campaigned against Dr. Paul, as did then-Republican Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. Fortunately, Dr. Paul still won.

In 2006, also in Texas, then-Republican House Majority Leader Tom DeLay resigned after winning the primary, due to ethics violations. It was too late for the Republicans to place another candidate on the ballot, thus there were only a Democrat and Bob Smither, a Libertarian appearing in the general election for that seat. Did the Republicans back the Libertarian? Of course not. They chose to get behind a write-in campaign for a Republican candidate. It didn't work, and the Democrat won.

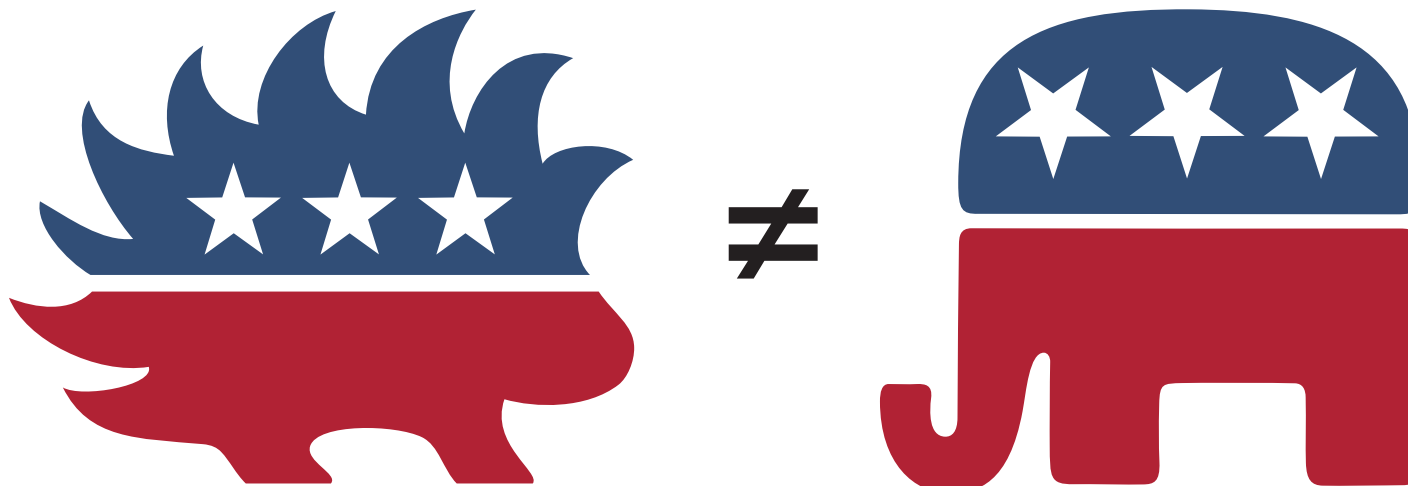
The Republican establishment would rather a Democrat win than a Libertarian.

The national GOP has made it extremely difficult for Libertarians to get on the ballot in partisan races in Arizona, has spent over a decade trying to keep us off of the ballot in Ohio, and recently the Republican-led Texas legislature passed a law requiring minor party candidates, such as ours, to pay expensive filing fees to get on the ballot — fees which will cost in the thousands to run for statewide office, and which few of our candidates can afford. Republicans (and Democrats) will do anything to prevent candidates who want to shrink government from winning elections.

Libertarianism isn't conservative nor liberal, in the current sense of that term. To be a Libertarian means you are against the initiation of force or fraud to get what you want or feel needs to be done. Period.

Working for freedom can be a long, slow grind. It is quite possible that I won't see a free society, or any significant shrinkage in government by the time I pass on. My time and efforts working for the cause through the Libertarian Party may not come to fruition. But I also know beyond the shadow of a doubt that I will never get a free society working through the Republican or Democrat parties.

Are you a Republican, or are you a Libertarian?



# Why we must change now

## How the two-party system has led to the oppression of minorities

**By Dr. Aaron Lewis**  
Connecticut

**I**t's no secret that African American, Hispanic and Asian voters have long remained overwhelmingly Democratic. According to the Pew Research Center, 84 percent of African American voters identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party, 63 percent for Hispanic voters and 65 percent for Asian voters. In comparison, Hispanic voters who lean toward the GOP are 28 percent, for Asians 27 percent, and only 8 percent for African Americans. The loyalty to the Democratic Party is of no surprise, as the Democratic Party was the institution that codified and safeguarded civil rights for minorities and has fought to protect them against their perceived enemy, the Republican Party.



Lewis

Few can dispute the historic strides Democrats have made for people of color with regards to civil and human rights, particularly during the 1960s and early 1970s. However, the question that comes to mind is: what is the Democratic Party doing today to serve the needs of its overwhelmingly black and other racial minority constituencies? The best way to address the answer to this challenging question is by looking at the facts in just a few key areas that vastly affect people of color.

### Farewell to welfare (in its present form)

It's no secret that African American, Hispanic and Asian voters have long remained overwhelmingly Democratic. According to the Pew Research Center, 84 percent of African American voters identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party, 63 percent for

Hispanic voters and 65 percent for Asian voters. In comparison, Hispanic voters who lean toward the GOP are 28 percent, for Asians 27 percent, and only 8 percent for African Americans. The loyalty to the Democratic Party is of no surprise, as the Democratic Party was the institution that codified and safeguarded civil rights for minorities and has fought to protect them against their perceived enemy, the Republican Party.

Few can dispute the historic strides Democrats have made for people of color with regards to civil and human rights, particularly during the 1960s and early 1970s. However, the question that comes to mind is: what is the Democratic Party doing today to serve the needs of its overwhelmingly black and other racial minority constituencies? The best way to address the answer to this challenging question is by looking at the facts in just a few key areas that vastly affect people of color.

### Dependency on social systems

Welfare encourages generational dependency on the government, which is the total opposite of what it claims to solve. It was intended to be a solution to the problem of poverty but has become an unhealthy crutch for many people, blacks and whites, perpetuating greater poverty and decreasing opportunities for economic growth and improvement. Most welfare recipients do not realize that their assistance is in actuality a loan that will be recovered through lottery wins, lawsuit settlements, or even after death through personal estates, further driving a wedge into generational poverty.

### An exorbitant bill in continuous deferment

One doesn't need to have an eco-

nomics degree to recognize the trillion-dollar annual expense of welfare. Most intelligent minds also recognize how that expense tremendously burdens the economy. The strength of any nation depends on that nation to produce a profit, not a continual deficit. The system, as it now exists, has not only placed us in a financial shortfall but has also helped to create a hostile environment of racism and classism that continues to be fueled by gross misunderstandings on both sides. This causes the average person to see blacks and Latinos as the problem, when in fact, bad policies are.

### Dismantling the black family

Welfare seeks to destroy the progress of and reinterpret the definition of the black family. If a black single mother receives public housing, she will swiftly lose her housing privileges if the father of her child ever decides to join them. A better option would be to help the father find meaningful employment with the intention of transitioning the family from dependency to self-sufficiency.

### Protect Yourself: Second Amendment

Every person, regardless of race, color, or creed, has the constitutional right to protect themselves. The 2nd Amendment affords all Americans the right for the people to "keep and bear arms." That controversial position has been the subject of great argument and bipartisan confusion. Most Democrats push for greater gun control, believing that would solve the problem of mass shootings and violence in America. Republicans fiercely defend their position to bear arms and see incidences of mass shootings and violence as unfortunate yet rare occurrences that should not be the standard of judgment for all

gun-carrying citizens.

What is largely ignored is that black people have been widely and disproportionately denied access to arms because of systemic racism and fears amongst policymakers, dating back to the Civil War. Added to that, politicians such as Hillary Clinton irresponsibly used the word "superpredators," borrowed from political scientist John J. Dilulio, to characterize and profile the average black male as a person who had a heightened chance at committing heinous crimes, thus necessitating the mass incarceration of blacks.

Under President Bill Clinton's watch was the highest rise in federal and state prisons in American history as he himself gladly signed his 1994 Crime Bill that has since destroyed the lives of thousands of black families. These bad policies and practices only produced a type of white fear, making it increasingly difficult for the average black person to be seen as worthy of needing protection of any kind. This left an entire sect of the population vulnerable to lethal attacks, often in their own neighborhoods by their own people.

### Education

Most black people have long failed to ask why most large cities with large black and Latino populations suffer from substandard education. And why is it that black students are much less likely to graduate from high school and attend college than white students with the same income? The answer is design. Much of what we experience in America has been designed that way by a two-party system that controls the outcomes, not necessarily of a person's destiny but certainly the pathway and stopping points along the way.

One of the basic elements of Libertarian thought is to offer people choice rather than give them one or two poor options. School choice, when operated



in its most genuine form, offers better schools as the solution to increase achievement among minorities. Furthermore, qualified leadership should become the standard by which superintendents and leadership are chosen, not simply race.

## Jobs, your money and opportunity

Black people have been largely left out of high-paying jobs. Here again, education becomes a key element in ensuring that black people are exposed to various professions in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematical, and Foreign Language fields. Exposure is the avenue to success in life. People who enjoy better jobs have been

exposed to those professions, giving them an array of vocational choices to choose from.

Personally, I loved the charismatic charm and high intelligence of President Barack Obama. However, under his administration, African Americans were the only ethnic group that did not rebound after the Great Recession.

Why is this? I do believe that Obama sincerely wanted to see African Americans have better opportunities economically. His challenge to make that happen was his very own party affiliation, which does not possess an infrastructure for economic development for minorities-only subsistence. He, like many politicians in the two-party system, was forced to make promises that he knew he could

not keep, as the system would not allow for it.

The political system in America is clearly broken. The solution to fixing it will require a new approach, not what already exists. When asked about why I, a black man, became Libertarian, my answer is always the same. It's obvious, it's embedded in the name: for liberty and freedom, two words that every person of color should treasure.

## The Libertarian fix

The way that our system presently operates, many of our freedoms are being challenged and may be possibly taken away.

The freedom to protect yourself, to build your own financial future, to choose where and how your child is

educated are issues that you need to be in control of, not the government. The Libertarian Party is the only party that believes in your personal liberties and freedom, fighting for the rights of minorities and against mass incarceration more gallantly than any other party has in America's history. You gave your vote to a two-party system, and they haven't delivered.

Choose to do something for yourself and make the shift to a party that represents your interests, not the self-interests of politicians. The time is now.

*Dr. Aaron Lewis is an educator, publisher and ghostwriter. He was the 2019 Libertarian candidate for mayor of Hartford, Conn.*

# What's on your mind?

Send letters to the editor to [lpnews@lp.org](mailto:lpnews@lp.org).

## LEAD WITH TRUTH.

Something is wrong with our government, and the time for change is now.

As a Senator I stood up for truth and voted against the lies of the Iraq War and against the return of deficit spending. Elected as an Independent Governor, I fought against the insiders' cronyism and saved the taxpayers millions of dollars. And despite long odds, we passed marriage equality.

I'm not just running for President of the United States to stop ALL unnecessary wars, end reckless spending and to stand up to government lies, I'm running to help the Libertarian Party. I know what it takes to win local races as an outsider, having done it seven times as a Councilman and Mayor.

I want to assist Libertarians in achieving electoral success at all levels and challenge the two parties that have led our nation astray. I know how hard it can be, but I want to do it with you, your state party and with Libertarians around the country!

**End The Senseless Wars.**

**End The Reckless Spending.**

**End The Failed War On Drugs.**

**Protect Our Personal Freedoms.**

**Tell The Truth.**

**LINCOLN CHAFEE**  
LIBERTARIAN FOR PRESIDENT

**We're on a Mission for Liberty and Truth: at the Local, State, and National Level. Will You Join Us?**

**Learn More About My Commitment to the Libertarian Party @ [www.LincolnChafee.com/TheLP](http://www.LincolnChafee.com/TheLP)**

# From the archives: The essence of liberty

**By David Nolan**  
LP Founder

As a founder of the Libertarian Party and editor-in-chief of California Liberty, I am often asked how to tell if someone is "really" a libertarian. There are probably as many different definitions of the word "libertarian" as there are people who claim the label. These range from overly broad ("anyone who calls himself a libertarian is one") to impossibly doctrinaire ("only those who agree with every word in the party platform are truly annointed").

My own definition is that in order to be considered a libertarian, at least in the political context, an individual must adhere without compromise to five key points. Ideally, of course, we'd all be in agreement on everything. But we're not, and probably never will be. Debate is likely to continue indefinitely on such matters as abortion, foreign policy, and whether, when, and how various government programs can be discontinued or privatized. But as far as I'm concerned, if someone is sound on these five points, he or she



Nolan

is de facto a libertarian; if he fails on even one of the five, he isn't.

What then, are the "indispensible five" — the points of no compromise?

## **You Own Yourself**

First and foremost, libertarians believe in the principle of self-ownership. You own your own body and mind; no external power has the right to force you into the service of "society" or "mankind" or any other individual or group for any purpose, however noble. Slavery is wrong, period.

Because you own yourself, you are responsible for your own well-being. Others are not obligated to feed you, clothe you, or provide you with health care. Most of us choose to help one another voluntarily, for a variety of reasons — and that's as it should be — but "forced compassion" is an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms.

## **The Right to Self-Defense**

Self-ownership implies the right to self-defense. Libertarians yield to no one in their support for our right as individuals to keep and bear arms. We only wish that the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution said "The right to self-defense being inalienable..." instead of that stuff about a "well-regulated militia". Anyone who thinks that government

— any government — has the right to disarm its citizens is not a libertarian!

## **No "Criminal Possession" Laws**

In fact, libertarians believe that individuals have the right to own and use anything — gold, guns, marijuana, sexually explicit material — so long as they do not harm others through force or the threat of force. Laws criminalizing the simple possession of anything are tailor-made for police states; it is all too easy to plant a forbidden substance in someone's home, car or pocket. Libertarians are as tough on crime — real crime — as anyone. But criminal possession laws are an affront to liberty, whatever the rhetoric used to defend them.

## **No Taxes on Productivity**

In an ideal world, there would be no taxation. All services would be paid for on an as-used basis. But in a less-than-ideal world, some services will be force-financed for the foreseeable future. However, not all taxes are equally deleterious, and the worst form of taxation is a tax on productivity — i.e., an income tax — and no libertarian supports this type of taxation.

What kind of taxation is least harmful? This is a topic still open for debate. My own preference is for a single tax on land. Is this "the" libertarian

position on taxes? No. But all libertarians oppose any form of income tax.

## **A Sound Money System**

The fifth and final key test of anyone's claim to being a libertarian is their support for an honest money system; i.e. one where the currency is backed by something of true value (usually gold or silver). Fiat money — money with no backing, whose acceptance is mandated by the State — is simply legalized counterfeiting and is one of the keys to expanding government power.

The five points enumerated here are not a complete, comprehensive prescription for freedom, but they would take us most of the way. A government which cannot conscript, confiscate or counterfeit, and which imposes no criminal penalties for the mere possession and peaceful use of anything, is one that almost all libertarians would be comfortable with.

*David F. Nolan (1943–2010) was one of the original founders of the Libertarian Party. Nolan subsequently served the party in a number of roles including National Committee Chair, editor of the party newsletter, Chair of the By-laws Committee, Chair of the Judicial Committee, and Chair of the Platform Committee.*

## SFL to host presidential debate

Students for Liberty will host a Libertarian presidential candidate debate Saturday, April 4. The debate will take place as part of the organization's annual "Liberty-Con" event in Washington, D.C.

The conference will feature speeches by John Mackey, CEO of Whole Foods, and Vernon Smith, Nobel Prize-winning economist.

Two topical debates will also take center stage during the three-day event. "Is government necessary?" will be considered by David Friedman and Timothy Sandefur. "Does the government need to intervene for capitalism to work?" will be tackled by Gene Epstein, former Economics Editor of

Barron's, and Steven Pearlstein, Pulitzer Prize winner.

Registration for LibertyCon is \$99 for adults and \$49 for students. The presidential debate is open only to registrants. LP members can save \$10 off registration by entering code LPdebate at checkout.

In addition to discounted tickets, students may also apply for travel scholarships by visiting [libertycon.com/travel](http://libertycon.com/travel).

Hotel rooms are available through the LibertyCon website for a discounted rate of \$155 per night.

For more information about LibertyCon, or to register, visit [libertycon.com](http://libertycon.com).

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# History of zoning laws full of racism, class issues

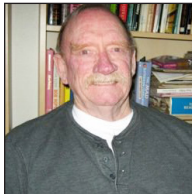
By Michael H. Wilson  
Washington

Many people have been sold on the idea that zoning laws are here to protect the value of their homes from a chicken slaughterhouse or a bar opening next door to their bedroom. There is some merit in that, but that is not an honest reason we have zoning laws and other housing regulations.

If you and I use racial slurs in our everyday conversation most likely we will be considered rude or crude, and most people will avoid us. However, if we are an elected official or someone in the planning business, few people will be bothered when we support government policies that actually are a burden and discriminate against others because of their race or ethnic history.

In 1880, San Francisco passed a law requiring licensing for laundries in wooden buildings. That might have been a good idea because of the potential fire hazard but those enforcing the law singled out the Chinese. All white-owned laundries received a license and all Chinese were denied a license. Mr. Yick Wo, if that was his real name, refused to shut his place, was arrested, confined to jail and fought the city. The case, *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, went all the way to the Supreme Court. The court ruled that the law appeared to be race-neutral as it was written but it was enforced in a discriminatory manner and that the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment applied to Mr. Yick even though the law at the time denied him an opportunity to be a citizen. That effort to control where people lived and worked wasn't the last. It was only the beginning.

The progressives introduced the ideas of scientific management to government in the 19th century and applied that to land use planning, an idea that they borrowed from Europe.



Wilson

Germany and England were two of the first nations to adopt land-use planning and ones that the United States codes were modeled after. Los Angeles, Boston and New York were early adopters.

The late 1800s and early 1900s saw a number of public issues come together. Public health concerns were being discussed along with immigration and eugenics. Science and pseudo-science were all mixed together. Immigrants from southern Europe, African-Americans, Hispanics, Native-Americans and just the general poor all fell victim to political decisions based on poor information, while people who were trying to make a name for themselves or feather their own nest benefitted.

In 1910, Baltimore adopted the first zoning laws that were openly drawn to keep African-Americans and whites separated by law. In 1910, when Baltimore Mayor Mahool said "Blacks ... should be quarantined in isolated slums in order to reduce the incidents of civil disturbance, to prevent the spread of communicable disease into the nearby white neighborhoods, and to protect property values among the white majority." Many other cities soon followed.

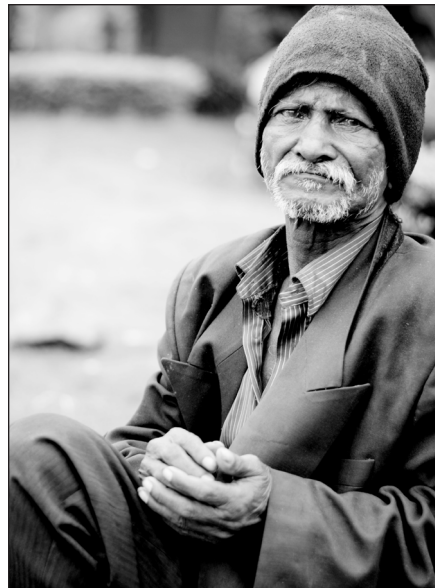
This process spread quickly but was overturned in 1917 by the Supreme Court in *Buchanan v. Warley*. Regardless, the court's decision did not stop cities and towns nationwide from passing such laws.

As African-Americans began to leave the South in response to the need for workers during WWI, more cities outside of the South adopted zoning laws that were racist in the manner they were drawn. Even if the Supreme Court had ruled that cities could not specifically target Af-

frican-Americans, cities, especially in the South did everything they could to corral African-Americans to specific areas. Then, in a 1926 case, the issue became one of economic interest when the Supreme Court handed down the famous *Euclid v. Ambler* decision that is used to permit zoning today. When Justice Sutherland wrote the decision, he referred to a planned apartment complex as "a mere parasite" on the neighborhood and how it would affect the neighborhood values.

With economic concerns as a source of control, it became easy to set standards that kept African-Americans out of certain areas.

While most of the public tends to think that the way their city is designed is unique, in reality, a small group of city planning consultants have had a hand in designing many of the nation's cities. Since the early 1920s keeping the races segregated has been a major goal in many urban plans. Central to the planning for the future



were planners such as Harland Bartholomew and Fredrick Law Olmstead, Jr. These men are responsible for much of the racial discrimination that was written into the zoning laws across the nation.

Harland Bartholomew was a major consultant to many city planning departments and involved in designing plans for cities nationwide and in some other nations.

Bartholomew began working in planning with a company that was developing the plans for Newark, N.J. Shortly after that, he was hired by Newark as the first city planner in the nation while in his early twenties. In

1916, he moved to St. Louis where he remained until 1953 as city planner. During that time, he started his own firm and eventually worked on the plans for five hundred or more cities across the nation and internationally.

Bartholomew focused on slum clearance in an effort at urban renewal to make the city more efficient and designed for the automobile which was a rapidly growing source of urban transit.

Sources quote him as denigrating African-Americans and suggesting that the races be separated to protect "... neighborhood property values." He saw black people as a burden on society, and while he knew the law prohibited outright segregation, he worked to find a way around it. Eventually, 70,000 black people in St. Louis would be relocated. Only a fraction would be adequately compensated. Not only did they lose financially, they also left behind family and friends which added to the strains their families endured.

In their zeal to control what people do, the political elites often end up with little to show for their efforts. The 1926 *Euclid v. Ambler* decision had a wide impact nationally, but locally it was a bit different. The land involved would remain vacant for 20 years. Eventually the federal government seized it during WWII and built a defense plant there. After the war, General Motors used the place to build auto parts and today the property is used mainly to sell used industrial machinery. It might be interesting to know how those uses affected the value of the nearby property.

A few years ago the city placed a memorial on the site to remember the importance of the decision of which the lot was the subject. No mention is made on the memorial of the damage to the relations between the races or to the cost to the public caused by zoning regulations.

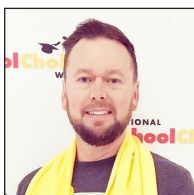
*Michael H. Wilson has a B.A. from the Evergreen State College where he studied history and presently researches urban economic issues.*



# Choice is freedom: The case for school choice

**By Travis Groo**  
North Carolina

I will appear on the ballot for NCGA Senate 17 in 2020. One of my platform issues is school choice. I'm passionate about parents deciding the best method of education for their kids. Every child learns differently and at different paces. There is no one-size-fits-all curriculum unless I just haven't discovered it yet (if you find it, please do send it my way).



Groo

One thing I do know for certain though is that I do not want the state dictating how, when and where my kids learn. Perhaps some of you feel the same?

"What is the purpose of industrial education? To fill the young of the species with knowledge and awaken their intelligence? Nothing could be further from the truth. The aim is simply to reduce as many individuals as possible to the

same safe level, to breed and train a standardized citizenry, to put down dissent and originality. That is its aim in the United States and that is its aim everywhere else." — H. L. Mencken

I began my schooling when I was five years old, like most kids. My mom, who was opposed to sending us to public schools, co-founded a Christian school in the little north-east Texas town in which we were living. She did not want us indoctrinated by the state's version of education.

My sister went to the same school for all of K-12, while I went from K-9 until we moved to Florida. My mother accepted new employment at another Christian school, where I attended 10th grade until I got expelled. I certainly hit my "rebellious years" around that time, and wanted to get out of the Christian school system and attend public school. I feel remorseful for the way I interacted with teachers, as I did not give them a good time! I found myself not fitting in very well, and I felt isolated at times, like an outcast. Needless to say, I finished my last two years at a public high school. I still didn't fit in,

them for the first two years out of pure necessity. The closest private school with decent reviews was over 45 minutes away. In Atlanta traffic, that is no fun. I have so much respect for any mothers or fathers who take on this challenge. I think it takes a lot of focus, commitment and dedication to homeschool, as it was a good temporary choice for my family at the time.

After relocating to Raleigh, my wife and I enrolled our children in a Christian school, with which we are all very happy! They are excelling in every area. We are currently utilizing the Opportunity Scholarship

forming well, then no amount of money is going to help. It's not necessarily about money! Adding more money to a broken system is like pouring water into a jug with holes punched in the side of it. We must first plug the holes, or we are wasting valuable resources. They either have bad methods that need to be evaluated and changed, or the students will suffer the consequences. Either way, just like any business, if it fails, another business that offers a better service will come in to attempt success where the other business did not.

The free-market approach to education works the same way. Parents

are pulling their kids out of bad schools all of the time, and sending them to better schools. However, the education funds should follow the students, not the schools. If a particular school closes because parents decide to send their kids elsewhere, and the school loses money because their headcount drops, then it's very possible that it needed to close. I'd like to see a more capitalistic approach

to our education system and expand the North Carolina's Opportunity Scholarship Program to all families. Let parents decide what works best. They know their kids better than anyone else. The state is certainly not fit to be our parental guidance.

Thank you for reading. I hope I can count on your support in 2020. May the CHOICE be with you. For more information about my campaign please visit [facebook.com/groo2020](https://facebook.com/groo2020).



but it was where I thought I wanted to be. Looking back, I'm thankful for my mother trying her hardest to educate my sister and me in the best possible way she knew how.

I now have two beautiful children of my own. They were both born in Atlanta. The public schools in that area were so mismanaged and in such disarray, that our county schools almost lost their accreditation. The county adjacent to us actually did lose it. We homeschooled

Program, which provides money for eligible full-time, non-public school students to attend the school of their choice. It doesn't pay for all of their tuition, but a good portion of it. I am so happy about this opportunity because it helps us send our kids to a school that we feel is best for them, where otherwise we would not be able to afford it. Plus, my kids love where they're going, and I am elated.

Choice is freedom. If a government-run district school is not per-



# Register for 2020 National Convention in Austin, Texas

The **2020 Libertarian National Convention** will be here before you know it! The convention packages allow you to get as little or as much out of the convention as you want.

**Basic Package:** \$179 (\$199 at the door)

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(Includes above, plus one breakfast with speaker.)

**Silver Package:** \$379 (\$409 at the door)

(Includes above, plus two lunches with speakers and entertainment.)

**Gold Package:** \$459 (\$479 at the door)

(includes above, plus Gala ticket with speakers.)

**Welcoming Committee:** \$1,000

(Includes above, plus sponsorship listing on various media and signage and lots of support for the convention.)

**Gala Only:** \$159 (\$199 at the door)

The 2020 Libertarian National Convention will be held May 21–25, 2020, in Austin, Texas.

**For more information about convention details and online registration options, visit:**



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Limited number of packages available for this sponsorship.

**Please join the Welcoming Committee today!**

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# Updates from our state affiliates

## IOWA

**By Joseph Howe**  
LPJA State Chair

Iowa Libertarian non-partisan candidates chalked up seven wins, including registered Libertarian Rob Green as Cedar Falls Mayor. Iowa also has scheduled its first Presidential Forum for its February 29th State Convention, moderated by Cedar Rapids Gazette political editorial board member Adam Sullivan, a YAL alumni. The forum will be simulcast by several podcasts and streamed live so both Iowa and national voters can hear from our Presidential candidates.

## ILLINOIS

**By Amanda Parsons**  
LPIL Communications Director

The Libertarian Party of Illinois was busy at the end of 2019 and continues to build momentum into 2020.

LPIL passed three important resolutions regarding issues around the state. As Illinois attempts to resurrect the death penalty, LPIL proposed a resolution vehemently opposing it. The citizens of Illinois will vote on the approval of a graduated income tax in the November election. The board of directors passed a resolution opposing that, and the party will continue to reach out to the community on why the tax would be detrimental to the people of Illinois. The LPIL also responded to the banning of e-cigarettes, proposing a resolution that the government has no business dictating what adults should put into their bodies or not. All three resolutions passed unanimously.

State chair Bennett Morris has been working with two organizations,

FairVote and Illinoisans for Ranked Choice Voting, to promote the passing of a ranked-choice voting system in Illinois.

The LPIL would also like to officially welcome Bill Redpath to the state and as their new LPIL Ballot Access Director. Illinois has some of the strictest ballot access laws in the nation and we would like to thank Bill for taking on his new role.

## UTAH

**By Amber C. Beltran**  
UTLP State Chair

The Utah Legislature met on Dec. 12, 2019, in a special session to pass sweeping tax legislation. This started a movement among many Utahans in a non-partisan effort to get the bill on the November ballot.

At first many referred to the effort as bipartisan but they were frequently reminded that many parties were opposed to this legislation and working toward a referendum and it is now referred to as non-partisan effort. While many Utahans and liberty-leaning Utahans have signed and volunteered, two Utahans have played an important role in volunteer coordination and gathering of signatures, Barry Short and Craig Bowden. Bowden, former LNC Region 1 Alternate, has led the

efforts in Cache Valley. When asked what motivated Bowden to get involved he said, "As a Libertarian, I naturally gravitate to stand against new taxes, but taxes on necessities like groceries I find morally repugnant."

Barry Short, the current vice-chair of Utah Libertarian Party (pictured below), has traveled to remote counties in Utah to help gather necessary signatures. Utah law requires that eight percent of voters in each of Utah's counties must be represented in a referendum. Barry has taken time from his business to travel to these counties to ensure the referendum meets the necessary requirements but more so to ensure the voices of rural Utahans are heard.

It has been very exciting to see so many coming together to tell the Legislators, "We've had enough." People are now talking about the importance of paying attention to how their senators and representatives are voting. Many are already expressing interest in supporting new candidates and not voting for the incumbents who polled their constituents prior to the special session and voted opposite of their constituents' wishes.

As of the date of writing, Jan. 17, there are four days until the deadline for signatures, so the results are not known. However, it has been exciting to see so many people involved in such a large, volunteer, non-partisan effort. *[Editor's note: They succeeded!]*

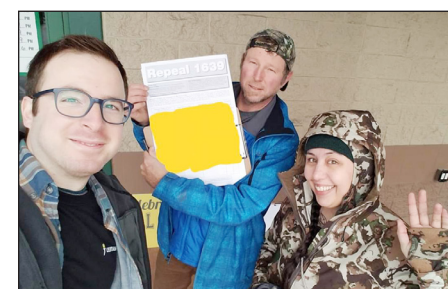


## WASHINGTON

**By Layla Bush**  
LPWA Regional Rep

I'm Region 2 Representative in Washington state and we just found out our Snohomish County organization made it in the local paper for their Bill of Rights day sign wave! We also took the opportunity to gather signatures to repeal a gun control law, 1639!

We have had great success with this event for several years now, especially standing by the mall near Christmas. We get lots of cheers and thumbs-ups, and that is a great morale boost for us!





## NATIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

### Cato releases fifth annual Human Freedom Index

The fifth annual Human Freedom Index, a comprehensive measure of freedom for a large number of countries around the globe, is now available online.

According to the Cato Institute, the 2019 index presents the state of human freedom in the world based on a broad measurement of personal, civil, and economic freedom that includes freedom of movement, women's freedoms, crime and violence, and legal discrimination against same-sex relationships.

Authored by Ian Vasquez, director of the Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity, and Tanja Porčnik, a Cato Institute adjunct scholar and president of the Visio Institute based in Slovenia, the index helps clarify relationships between freedom and other social and economic phenomena, and illustrates how the various facets of freedom interact with one another.

The index, co-published by the Cato Institute, the Fraser Institute, and the Liberales Institut at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, ranks 162 countries based on 76 distinct indicators using data from 2008 to 2017, the most recent year for which sufficient data are available.

In the new index, the U.S. ranks 15th. The report finds global freedom has fallen slightly since 2008. "The Rule of Law continues to be a weak point for the United States, which has relatively low ratings when it comes to such areas as the protection of property rights, the enforcement of contracts, and criminal justice," said Vásquez. "The Rule of Law plays a fundamental role in upholding liberty, so anyone who cares about freedom in the United States should be concerned with its evolution."

The index can be downloaded at [cato.org/human-freedom-index](http://cato.org/human-freedom-index).

### Ballotpedia debuts new "virtual debate" platform

What if you could ask a candidate running for office a few questions that would help you get to know them better as a person? What if you could ask those questions of every candidate on your ballot and watch their responses side-by-side before going to the polls? Ballotpedia and EnCiv recently announced the launch of Candidate Conversations, a new tool to help voters get to know their candidates.

Candidate Conversations is an online platform that allows voters to see their ballot-qualified candidates participate in a virtual conversation with the goal of letting voters get to know their candidates as people.

Ballotpedia and EnCiv say they began testing the platform in Nov. 2019 after a year of talking to voters, candidates and other nonprofit organizations about how they can best help voters feel confident that the candidates they choose are the ones that align with their values.

All candidates running for a federal and statewide election in 2020, in addition to those elections within the 100 most populated cities in the United States, will be invited to join

the conversation for their race.

Interested candidates should reach out to Ballotpedia at [info@ballotpedia.org](mailto:info@ballotpedia.org).

### Felony drug charges dropped after jury pool refuses to convict

NEW ORLEANS — Potential jurors who said they don't think marijuana should be illegal led to felony charges being dropped against a New Orleans man.

Police arrested Jabar Kensey on Bourbon Street with an ounce of marijuana. Kensey, a server at New Orleans' landmark Antoine's restaurant, faced a potential sentence of 15 to 20 years in prison under Louisiana's "three-strikes" law. He had two prior non-violent convictions.

Ad hoc Criminal District Court Judge Dennis Waldron halted the selection process after 20 of 25 potential jurors were dropped and no more jurors remained in the day's pool.

Some jurors were let go for other reasons, but Waldron said a "significant" number were dismissed on prosecutors' challenges. The judge specifically highlighted the jurors who voiced their opinions on "whether or not (marijuana) should be the subject of criminal laws outlawing it."

Prosecutors agreed to amend Kensey's felony charge to a misdemeanor under a plea agreement. Kensey agreed to spend 12 weekend days in jail and forfeit the \$100 in cash he carried on Bourbon Street in January.

According to NOLA.com, who originally reported the story, Kensey's sentence is far shorter than the years he might have faced if he had been convicted as charged. His attorney, Stavros Panagouloupoulos, said it showed that District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro's office bowed to the people's will on marijuana crimes.

"I think the District Attorney's Office heard their sentiments," Panagouloupoulos said. "Given the current climate in our country with regards to marijuana, I think this was an appropriate solution."

Jurors' rights to voice objections to criminal laws stretches back centuries, according to Texas defense attorney Clay Conrad. He told NOLA.com the courts have upheld the power of jurors to "nullify" charges with acquittals, despite overwhelming evidence of a defendant's guilt, if they object to the underlying law.

Conrad, who wrote a book on the subject, dubbed the situation in New Orleans "attempted jury nullification," and said he's heard of a similar case in Montana that also involved marijuana.

## Two great ways to promote liberty:



1

Grab a selfie in your gear

Put on your best LP swag and post a selfie to **#ProudlyLP**. And if you need more official gear, you can shop day or night at **LPStore.org**.

2

Buy your friends a membership

Give the Gift of Liberty! Head over to **LP.org/gift** and purchase a membership. Just give us their contact info and we'll take care of the rest!

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We are currently looking for Libertarian writers and content creators (i.e., news stories, features, opinion pieces, photos, videos, artists, etc. — sorry, not memes) who would like to contribute to official Libertarian Party publications, including the LP News, Liberty Pledge, LP.org and others.

If you're interested, please join our Facebook Group today!

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From WLWT 5, Covington, Ky.:

But there's a third name on the ballot in the gubernatorial race and there's a possibility he could tilt the outcome one way or the other.

His name is John Hicks.

He's professorial and polite in manner. Thoughtful in his political positions on the issues. He's a native Kentuckian, a Libertarian and a serious-minded reformer.

Every pundit in the Bluegrass would say he doesn't have a prayer of getting elected. But his spoiler potential is worth considering and tracking on election night.

Polling at one percent with little money and even less name recognition, Hicks plows ahead in undeterred fashion.

"I'm the only one of the three candidates that hasn't spent the past four years yelling at the other one," he tells one woman on the street to make a point about the contentious clashes between Bevin and Beshear.

He perseveres with what seems like an endless task of introducing himself.

"My name is John Hicks. My name will be on the ballot. Let me give you my card here," is how he often approaches strangers to talk politics for a moment or two.

And they seem to listen.

He concentrates mostly on parades and festivals and likes the grassroots one-to-one discussion he can generate by just being himself.

He is the largely unknown third of three running for governor.

The Bluegrass is well acquainted with the Republican incumbent and the Democrat challenger, who are neck and neck with 46 percent each in the latest Mason Dixon poll.

That potentially gives Hicks spoiler status, since seven percent in that poll were undecided.