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We all came to the Libertarian Party from somewhere, for some reason. We all defend or promote freedom in our own unique ways. Different approaches reach different people who are looking for their new political home.

Bilyeu

I was never active in any other political party, and always felt politically homeless. As an educator in the public school system for 20 years, I was undoubtedly alone in my political ideology. In the early 2000s while working on my first master’s degree, I was thrust into the libertarian mindset as a result of my research into the USA PATRIOT Act. It was that horrific piece of legislation that led me here.

In February, our very own Larry Sharpe announced his campaign for governor of New York on a cable news show with a mostly right-leaning viewership. Almost immediately, he was endorsed by the newly established Forward Party, made up primarily of disaffected Democrats. This exciting news made two things very clear. First, Larry is reaching people. His approach is working and people are paying attention. Secondly, this endorsement shows that even those who may not identify as Libertarian (yet) see how far we have come through 50 years of ballot access drives, lawsuits, and elections, and they know that the change they want to see can be realized through us.

I am encouraged by the news of this outside support for Larry. It whets the appetite for coalition building — to promote non-duopoly candidates, particularly where we need them most. I look forward to seeing other Libertarian candidates earn endorsements from those seeking to widen the lane for options beyond the two-party system.

Some among us might pucker a little at this crossover support coming in — get a little panicky. Some may worry that we are pandering, compromising, losing ourselves, betraying our principles. I’m not. Are you?

From where I stand, I see not just an opportunity to capitalize on support from those who see what we are doing as righteous, meaningful, impactful, even moral — I see an opportunity to be dutiful — to light the way for anyone who believes in freedom, voter choice, personal responsibility, and to lead the way for those who actively seek to eradicate tyranny no matter which form it takes.

So what still keeps voters from checking boxes next to our names across the country?

They want to know victory is possible by plurality. But they also want to be able to vote their conscience. We can help them with both of those. We already provide the choices — but we need to provide the means by which they can take the risk they perceive by voting for us.

For this reason we need to be at the forefront pushing advanced voting methods — Ranked Choice Voting, Approval Voting — more genuine and appropriate means of voter expression.

It’s also why we can’t shy away from coalition building. Groups that are laser focused on issues like drug policy reform, ending qualified immunity, abolishing the death penalty, expanding school choice, eliminating taxes, decriminalizing sex work, supporting immigrants and refugees, and so many more passions that we share are already aware that the Republicans and Democrats are not going to take any meaningful action where it matters. We need them to see that we are the vehicle for the political change they seek in the world.

The Libertarian Party can reenergize those who have lost hope or have been marginalized — we do this by differentiating ourselves through positivity. We can reset the tone for American politics by engaging professionally and dispassionately. We don’t have to rage about what we are against, if people understand what we are for. We don’t have to surrender self-defense or privacy — none of us want that. We must not allow ourselves to be aggressed upon, AND we must not cross the line to become aggressors. Don’t take that bait.

We Libertarians like to think Americans are tired of the same old parties — polls tell us they are. Polls tell us that Americans are tired of the old party messaging, their promises and lies, their failed policies — but it’s evident that voters are not tired of it actually.

Polls show that 75% of Americans are dissatisfied with the state of the country — a state the voters put us in year after year. With each election cycle, we Libertarians gear up with the mindset that this is our year; that pivotal moment when all the stars will align and things will finally change for us. I do believe we are experiencing an undoubtedly important time in our nation’s history, and I believe we have opportunities we’ve not seen before.

We don’t proclaim to have all the solutions to all the social and political problems we face. In fact, you may often hear me say, “I don’t know what it is, but I know what it ain’t.”

What we do proclaim and can offer though is a genuine acknowledgement that government doesn’t know best — and we can point to evidence of that fact. We can also point to evidence that the government’s use of force, and the use of force in general, provokes resentment, deliberate non-compliance, and an attitude of uncooperativeness. One side or the other refuses to back down or even negotiate toward a win-win.

We’ve seen this recently in places like Australia and Canada,
in our own communities, and sadly, within our beloved party.

When people are misled or ill-informed about the problem they wish to solve, the use of force to address it magnifies the harm done. This is where we are finding ourselves so much more often now.

While we all work to find our sea legs in this changing tide — internally and externally — we thankfully have elected leaders out there carrying the torch for us: Representative Marshall Burt in Wyoming. Supervisor Hewitt in California. Trisha Butler, Kalish Morrow, and Ashley Shade — City Councilors in Tennessee, California, and Massachusetts, respectively. And the highest ranking Libertarian we’ve had — former Congressman Justin Amash.

And many more to whom we owe our gratitude and respect.

As of this past November, we are up to 355 elected Libertarians nationwide. For this reason, we must live to fight another day — we must stick with it — like the legends among us who got us this far. I can’t walk away or give up, because they haven’t.

It has taken us 50 years to get here — 350+ electeds out there now. I can’t wait to see what they accomplish — to see what the seeds they’ve planted will grow to become and what legacies they leave.

It may take 50 years more for any one of us to realize our own individual goals through our efforts here and those of our colleagues. I can assure you though, no matter which goals we do accomplish — we will likely never have the luxury to back down from our efforts to challenge the cult of the omnipotent state.
153 years ago Frederick Douglass, speaking in Boston, addressed what was considered at the time a looming “crisis” of mass migration from China to the United States. Never one to allow fearmongering and bigotry to cloud the light of his liberatory principles, Douglass systematically raised and dismantled every argument that had been or could be advanced in favor of restricting Chinese (or indeed any) immigration to the United States.

(An astute observer might note that the xenophobic and nativist arguments made to justify violence against immigrants in the 19th Century are largely indistinguishable from those made today, and have never gotten any truer.)

Douglass’ speech, now referred to as “The Composite Nation,” outlined an unapologetically libertarian argument in favor of not just open borders, but open naturalization and open integration as well. Defending the libertarian principle of free movement, Douglass’ argument was simple, direct, and unassailable:

I submit that this question of Chinese immigration should be settled upon higher principles than those of a cold and selfish expediency.

There are such things in the world as human rights. They rest upon no conventional foundation, but are external, universal, and indestructible. Among these, is the right of locomotion; the right of migration; the right which belongs to no particular race, but belongs alike to all and to all alike. It is the right you assert by staying here, and your fathers asserted by coming here. It is this great right that I assert for the Chinese and Japanese, and for all other varieties of men equally with yourselves, now and forever. I know of no rights of race superior to the rights of humanity, and when there is a supposed conflict between human and national rights, it is safe to go to the side of humanity. […]

Right wrongs no man.

For all his genius and rhetorical prowess, however, Douglass’ argument ultimately failed to persuade the public sentiment of the day.

Six years after Douglass’ oration, Congress enacted the Page Act, aimed at forbidding the immigration of Chinese women to the United States. The strictures of the Page Act were the first major immigration restrictions in U.S. history, bringing the American Republic’s century of open borders to a close. Seven years later in 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, effectively banning Chinese immigration altogether. The U.S. immigration system has been discriminating against people for having the temerity to be born on the wrong side of imaginary lines ever since. Americans still swell with pride at the Statue of Liberty and her promise to shelter the huddled masses yearning to breathe free, but U.S. policy has spat on that libertarian idea for more than a century now.

What does any of this have to do with the Libertarian Party?

The Libertarian Party has followed a similarly tragic trajectory on the question of freedom of movement: from decades of genuinely championing the principle, to years rejecting it outright, to the unsettled question today and an unknown future.

From the party’s inception throughout the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, the Libertarian Party platform articulated ideals of free migration that would have made Mr. Douglass proud.

If the great right of locomotion couldn’t be policy, if the door-kicking enforcement raids, the state violence at the border, and the needless deaths of untold numbers of innocent people were going to continue, at least there would be a political party willing to stand up and voice its steadfast opposition to this evil.
The 1980 Libertarian Platform is illustrative:

We hold that human rights should not be denied or abridged on the basis of nationality. We condemn massive roundups of Hispanic-Americans and others by the federal government in its hunt for individuals not possessing required government documents. Undocumented non-citizens should not be denied the fundamental freedom to labor and to move about unmolested. Furthermore, immigration must not be restricted for reasons of race, religious or political creed, or sexual preference.

We therefore call for the elimination of all restriction on immigration, the abolition of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Border Patrol, and a declaration of full amnesty for those people who have entered the country illegally. We oppose government welfare payments to non-citizens just as we oppose government welfare payments to all other persons. We welcome Indochinese and other refugees to our shores, and condemn the efforts of U.S. government officials to induce Indochinese governments to create a new “Berlin wall” that would keep them captive.

Doesn’t get much clearer than that. Human rights exist independent of (“external, universal, and indestructible”) and superior to national origin or any other immutable characteristic used to justify violence (“when there is a supposed conflict between human and national rights...”). All immigration enforcement agencies should be unconditionally abolished. Citizens and non-citizens alike should be treated equally under the law. Refugees are welcome here. That unbowed libertarian defiance in defense of the fundamental humanity of immigrants stands in stark contrast to what had become of the party by 2006. In 2006, the same Libertarian Party that had spent its entire existence echoing the liberators of the past and calling for the abolition of border enforcement suddenly revealed a wilting contempt for immigrants, in fact echoing many of the same illogical and disproven canards about “stealing jobs,” hygiene, and security that Frederick Douglass had broken into absurdities more than a century prior:

Our borders are currently neither open, closed, nor secure. This situation restricts the labor pool, encouraging employers to hire undocumented workers, while leaving those workers neither subject to nor protected by the law. A completely open border allows foreign criminals, carriers of communicable diseases, terrorists and other potential threats to enter the country unchecked. Pandering politicians guarantee access to public services for undocumented aliens, to the detriment of those who would enter to work productively, and increasing the burden on taxpayers.

The legitimate function and obligation of government to protect the lives, rights and property of its citizens, requires awareness of and control over the entry into our country of foreign nationals who pose a threat to security, health or property. Political freedom and escape from tyranny demands that individuals not be unreasonably constrained by government in the crossing of political boundaries...

Sixteen years later, the platform still hasn’t fully recovered its libertarian luster. Even today, the platform declares only a qualified “right” of migration, one that can be negated whenever it is deemed “unreasonable.”

This qualification appears nowhere else in the platform, and for good reason: when would we ever subject our natural human rights to anyone else’s opinion about what is “reasonable?”

Do Libertarians support gun rights only when “reasonable?” Are Libertarians persuaded by the argument that drug prohibition is morally acceptable as long as it’s “reasonable?” A right that is only a right when “reasonable” is no right at all. We of all people understand that.

Worse, this dimming of the Libertarian light on immigration has come in the midst of the worst mass displacements in modern history, and at a time when the other two major parties are careening into abject nativist populism as quickly as they can arrange it.

In short: if Libertarians retreat from our open border principles now, who is left to defend them? If no Libertarian ever says another word about collectivism, or gun rights, or taxation, the libertarian views on those issues will still be represented by some faction or another on the American political landscape. There are others to carry the flame.

But we are the only open borders advocates in America. The Libertarian Party is the only party in anyone’s living memory that once got this question right. If we let this particular flame go out, the rest is darkness.

If this appeal were intended for Republicans, I would do my damndest to reiterate the benefits to the U.S. economy and the middle finger to repressive foreign regimes represented by free migration. If this appeal were intended for Democrats, I would wax poetic about social justice and power dynamics and the racism baked into immigration restrictions.

But I’m not talking to Republicans and Democrats. I’m talking to you. To Libertarians. And for that it should suffice merely to say that immigrants are human. And right wrongs no man.

Adam Bates is an attorney and immigrant rights advocate.
Two years ago, I left the Republican Party. Having considered myself a Republican for most of my adult life, having run for and served in the United States Congress as a Republican, and having run for President as a Republican, finally actually leaving the party was surprisingly easy. I believe in freedom and limited government. The Republican Party has become an authoritarian-embracing cult. I had no interest in belonging to a cult.

Yeah, it was easy to leave. But, damn, it’s been tough to find my way now that I’m a political independent. I’m homeless. And to be homeless politically is a difficult spot to be in if you want to have an impact on our politics and make a difference. We’re defined by our political “tribes,” our political “homes.” It’s perfectly fine to be a conservative or a progressive or a moderate or a libertarian, but to try to act on whatever beliefs you have and turn those beliefs into actual policy, you have to engage in our political system. You have to have a home. You have to be a Republican. Or a Democrat. Or a member of one of our minor political parties.

Now this sucks. And it especially sucks living with the two-party duopoly we’ve had in America for 160 some years. Screw the two party system. I’ve been shouting from my mountain top for years that we’d be better served living in a more vibrant, coalition-building political system with three to four major political parties.

I actually believe the duopoly is much closer to its endgame than most people realize. I believe there will be a common sense, get shit done, radically-centrist new political party before us in as soon as two or three election cycles. Why? Because that’s where most Americans are, and as the Democratic Party continues lurching to the left, and the Republican Party continues marching down its authoritarian road, that opening for a coalition political party will only grow.

But until that day comes, someone like me has no home. And that means someone like me, in all likelihood, can’t run for office again. Most of the Conservatives/Never Trumpers who left the Republican party are in the same position I’m in. Sort of hanging out in the land of independents. Some became Democrats, some joined the Libertarian Party, but most, like me, are waiting. Waiting for this seismic political realignment to happen. I haven’t become a Democrat because I disagree with Democrats on almost all policy issues, and truthfully, I’ve thought about joining the Libertarian Party… but I’m not there yet.

I truly believe we’re living in revolutionary times. I believe we haven’t been this divided as a country since right before the Civil War (and by the way, I was delivering this message ten years ago when I was in Congress, well before Trump came on the scene). I also believe all of this is going to lead to a political realignment unlike anything America has ever seen. No longer belonging to the Republican Party, and finding myself wandering in the political wilderness for a period here, most of all I feel like I’m waiting and trying to position myself best for the realignment to come. Using my voice as effectively as I can outside of the formal world of politics — media, TV, talk radio, podcasting, social media, public speaking — this seems to be where my focus is now, and where my focus will be for awhile, until things shake out politically and there is clarity when it comes to new political homes.

So yes, in essence, when you find yourself outside the Democratic/Republican duopoly, as I am, and you still have a desire to influence politics & policy, as I do, you are waiting. Not just sitting around. You are proactively waiting. Readying yourself for the changes to come. To, as best as you can, defend and promote freedom and limited government, for as long as you can. And that’s me right now.

Joe Walsh is an American politician, podcaster, former talk radio host, and former 2020 Republican presidential candidate. Joe served one term in the United States House of Representatives representing Illinois’s 8th congressional district. Find him on Twitter @ WalshFreedom and check out his podcast, White Flag.
Find A Volunteer!

Do you need volunteers for your next event? Would you like new people in your local affiliate? We've got them! The State CRM Project (Customer Relationship Management) has 32,176 volunteers — some of them probably live in your county — and most of them have never been asked to help grow your local affiliate. State and county leaders can contact these volunteers today!

How do you find these potential volunteers?

It’s simple. Start using the CRM, our state and national database of activists, registered Libertarians, and people who have expressed interest in the LP. To get yourself set up, ask your state IT Director or Admin or go to my.lp.org/user-request

If you’re already using the State CRM, it’s as easy as 1-2-3:

1. From the main dashboard, click the green CiviCRM button on the left sidebar menu
2. Click on ‘Available Dashlets’ right below your name and welcome
3. Drag the ‘Volunteer Inquiries’ dashlet onto your dashboard

Your list of Volunteers will display after a few moments. Now you are ready to pick up the phone and introduce yourself to some new potential volunteers!

If your state is not on the State CRM, talk to your state board or executive committee about joining the State CRM project. This amazing tool is part of what your national dues pay for.
As the War on Drugs begins to ramp down after 50 years of failure and devastation, authoritarians are hardly going quietly into that good night. The nanny state never sleeps, and the new moral panic is the scourge of sex work and pornography. Lawmakers are hard at work eroding free speech online in the name of “moral decency.”

**The War on Porn**

Evangelical organizations like Exodus Cry/TraffickingHub are falsely linking pornography with sex trafficking in an effort to boost support for banning porn outright. They’re joined by wealthy agribusiness barons, accused of human trafficking themselves, who are currently funding disinformation campaigns to implicate porn in human trafficking.

These groups greatly exaggerate the prevalence of and demand for sex trafficking, stating for instance that sex trafficking is a $150 billion industry. In reality, $150 billion is the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimate for human trafficking as a whole, not sex trafficking. Only 19% of human trafficking victims are trafficked for sex. Industries like farming, fishing, and domestic labor make up the majority of trafficking. There’s no credible evidence of a boom in commercial sex trafficking in the United States or to suggest more American men are going abroad to partake in commercial sex trafficking.

Rates of sex trafficking in the US aren’t rising. The wider availability of online porn has actually coincided with a massive decrease in sexual violence against women and teen pregnancy rates.

Despite this, 16 states have declared pornography a “public health crisis,” a first step toward banning porn. Many conservative commentators are calling for porn bans and further erosion of Section 230. In 2021, the Utah legislature passed HB72, which requires manufacturers to add porn filters to all cell phones and tablets sold to Utah customers.

**The War on Sex Workers**

The moral panic around commercial sex trafficking in the United States is also eroding Americans' civil liberties and increasing violence against sex workers. Again, many of the same conservative and Evangelical groups are funding disinformation campaigns in order to increase support for laws which further criminalize and stigmatize all non-mongamous, heterosexual sex while censoring sex-related information online.

These groups pushed for 2018’s “Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act” and “Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act,” more commonly known as SESTA/FOSTA, which purported to stop sex trafficking but actually just chilled online speech and made sex work more dangerous while doing absolutely nothing to stop sex trafficking. SESTA/FOSTA pushed websites like Craigslist and Backpage offline. Sex workers used these sites to avoid police violence, share lists of dangerous clients, positively identify clients, and negotiate
The Libertarian Party supports the decriminalization of prostitution. We assert the right of consenting adults to provide sexual services to clients for compensation, and the right of clients to purchase sexual services from consenting sex workers.
Representatives of the state senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives have run for office at various levels, including city council, JAL members have run for office at various levels, including city council, the state senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives.

In some cases, the LP and the Libertarian philosophy have realized in spite of a recent court ruling that overturned a decision to reduce petitioning requirements for third-party candidates. “We are determined that the unfair requirements for Libertarian Party candidates will not keep us off of the ballot,” says LP Georgia chair, Ryan Graham. “If we must obtain thousands of signatures to run, then that is what we will do.” The Republican and Democratic parties have no signature requirement for ballot access.

You can support LPGeorgia and all our candidates at lpgeorgia.com/donate.

**Anniversary of the founding of JAL**

The Libertarian Party of Georgia nominated candidates for the November 2022 election at the recent state party convention including a full slate of statewide candidates. In addition to the state offices, seven candidates have been nominated for district races for both the U.S. House and State Legislature.

This historic number of candidates was realized in spite of a recent court ruling that overturned a decision to reduce petitioning requirements for third-party candidates. “We are determined that the unfair requirements for Libertarian Party candidates will not keep us off of the ballot,” says LP Georgia chair, Ryan Graham. “If we must obtain thousands of signatures to run, then that is what we will do.” The Republican and Democratic parties have no signature requirement for ballot access.

In 2020, Republican candidates and PACs filed lawsuits to remove all LPTexas candidates from the ballot who did not pay the unconstitutional filing fee. LPTexas defended our candidates’ ballot positions in the Austin Court of Appeals.

As the Libertarian Party prepares to celebrate the golden anniversary of its first presidential campaign, the Jefferson Area Libertarians (JAL) will soon celebrate the silver anniversary of its founding (April 9, 1997). The JAL, based in Charlottesville, Virginia (home of Thomas Jefferson), has a distinguished record of accomplishment in promoting the LP and the Libertarian philosophy.

**Connor Lumpkin**

Connor Lumpkin has served as JAL Secretary since July 1997; he also serves as advisor to Students for Individual Liberty at the University of Virginia. Dr. Lumpkin has served several terms on the Libertarian National Committee; he serves as LNC chair during the 2000-2002 term.

Several JAL activities have generated substantial media attention. In particular, the “Bill of Rights Acclamation,” held annually on December 15, has featured prominent speakers who celebrate the Libertarian principles of liberty and responsibility.

The JAL has also sponsored “Tax Day” protests, information booths at county fairs and concerts, and floats in Independence Day parades. For roughly 15 years, JAL representatives have appeared monthly on a popular Charlottesville talk show to discuss Libertarian views on the issues of the day.

Many people deserve credit for JAL accomplishments, including Scott Bandy, Lindsey Burke, Greg Cunningham, James Curtis, Nancy Howell, Paul Jones, Hallee Morgan, John Munchmeyer, Gerhard Schoenthal, Arin Sime, Marc Smith, Cole Terlesky, and Gary Westmoreland.

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**Joe Burnes, Texas**

During the 2019 legislative session, Texas passed a brand-new law requiring LPTexas candidates to pay a candidacy filing fee as high as $5,000 depending on the position sought. LPTexas candidates have to pay the filing fee to the state for the state to use however the legislature decides. Prior to 2019, Republican and Democratic candidates did have to pay a filing fee to their parties, but for different reasons. The Republican and Democratic parties use the money to either pay the state or themselves, but all to subsidize the cost of the primary elections. Texas law mandates that LPTexas nominate its candidates by convention; they cannot participate in the primaries. LPTexas and its county affiliates have to pay for their own nominating conventions, without any help from the state.

In 2020, Republican candidates and PACs filed lawsuits to remove all LPTexas candidates from the ballot who did not pay the unconstitutional filing fee. LPTexas defended our candidates’ ballot positions in the Austin Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of Texas.

In 2021, Texas revised the filing fee law to include language barring our delegates from even “considering” a candidate for nomination if the candidate had not paid the filing fee. The law still requires LPTexas candidates to pay the fee directly to the state, and none of that money is used to help LPTexas fund its conventions. It amounts to unconstitutional discrimination. LPTexas has filed suit against the state over this statute, citing violations of the First and Fourteenth Amendments, which provide protections of freedom of association, freedom of speech, and equal protection under the law. LPTexas is prepared to see this legal battle through to its conclusion. Filed in federal court, the court has set a hearing on LPTexas’ application for preliminary injunction at the end of February. We anticipate an ongoing battle, and those who wish to support us in this effort to defend voter choice, free and fair elections, and ending two-party rule, may donate directly to our legal fund at: www.lptexas.org/legalfund.

**Jim Lark, Virginia**

Jim Lark has served as JAL secretary since July 1997; he also serves as advisor to Students for Individual Liberty at the University of Virginia. Dr. Lark has served several terms on the Libertarian National Committee; he serves as LNC chair during the 2000-2002 term.

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JAL successes include preventing passage of bad ordinances and protecting the rights of citizens. In some cases, the JAL was the only organization to defend people against government predation. JAL members have run for office at various levels, including city council, the state senate, and the U.S. House of Representatives.
Feena Bonoan, Hawaii

Ho’olaule’a

The Libertarian Party of Hawaii started the year out with the State Convention held on January 8th at the Ala Moana Hotel in Honolulu, and around the nation via Zoom. A new chair, Michelle Tippens, was elected unanimously as 10 year veteran chair Tracy Ryan handed off the gavel. At the convention we paid homage to the late Dick Rowland. Dick was a lifetime member of The Libertarian Party of Hawaii and founder of Grassroot Institute, Hawaii’s leading independent think tank. Guest speakers Justin Amash and Marc Victor zoomed in to deliver hope and speak with attendees of the convention.

Feena Bonoan gave promising 2020 election statistics and announced her bid for LNC Representative At-Large. Region 1 Representative Chris Luchini attended in person to give an update on the national level. Apollo Pazell of the Frontier Project and national Director of Development Tara DeSisto spoke about the magnifications and winnability of a Libertarian in the deep blue state of Hawaii.

Holoholo

Our out of town guests did not let the state’s tyrannical vaccine passports and mask mandates get in the way of having a good time. We had a successful fundraiser at Roy’s in Hawaii Kai, and Libertarian karaoke and a dinner under the stars was held at Ken Schooland’s house.

Hawaii is a unique place and we who get to live here do almost anything to stay here. The governing body of Hawaii knows this and uses it against us. The folks who visited us from the mainland found out first hand what liberties look like when they are taken away inch by inch for decades. Hawaii has no real opposition to the Democratic regime, so every action and law made by the government only escalates and increases government control. If Libertarians won even one seat in Hawaii it would put a crack in the bedrock of the Democratic party, and God willing the seeds of communism that have been brought here.

Mana’o

Marc Victor of Attorneys for Freedom, who has practices in Arizona and in Hawaii, has started a global peace movement that he hopes will take root in Hawaii. The movement called Live and Let Live is based on the non-aggression principle. Marc, along with the group For Our Rights and over a dozen named individuals, is also suing Hawaii’s governor, David Ige — the same governor who sent the state into panic over a false ballistic missile threat a year before COVID. The grievances cited include forced house arrests of the citizens of Hawaii, social exclusion, loss of employment, and financial hardships that have occurred over the governor’s expired state emergency orders.

A Hui Hou

Going forward in the year, legislation is in session and the capitol is closed to the public. Testimonies are written or people may zoom into the session. There are many bills that members are passionate about and we encourage folks to submit testimony. March 1st is the first day to take out nomination papers for elected officials. Confirmed Libertarian candidates are Michelle Tippens and Feena Bonoan. We are looking forward to ramping up into campaign season as an organized, growing, and united Libertarian Party of Hawaii.

Chris Luchini, New Mexico

New Mexico, like so many other states, must spend a significant amount of time and energy on securing ballot access for our candidates before they can even get to the work of actually campaigning. We are required to file a petition including at least 230 valid signatures that for 2022 were due no later than February 1st.

At 5:30pm on Monday, January 31st we were approximately 20 signatures short of the requirement.

Our canvassers were out and about and willing to go above and beyond to collect signatures, we just needed to find the people who would be willing to sign. We reached out to LP National for support, and Bekah Congdon jumped into action — after her normal working hours were over. Thanks to data obtained during the Jorgensen/Cohen campaign in 2020, we had a list of names and cell phone numbers for people who were not already receiving our communications. We determined the areas to target based on where our canvassers were located and got a mass text blast out to approximately 1900 likely Libertarian voters.

Responses started to pour in immediately and appointments were set up for our petition gatherers to meet individuals at their homes or workplaces as late as 11:30pm that night and continuing the following day until 1:30pm. We collected about 70 additional petition signatures before the deadline, and secured our place on the ballot!

Brian Irving, North Carolina

The Libertarian Party of Rockingham County has adopted a highway!

One of our founding principles and a primary reason that we exist is to improve our home community. Caring for our natural environment is one way we can protect our small section of this planet for future generations.

Volunteerism is a basic expression of human relationships. It is about people’s need to participate in their societies and to feel that they matter to others.
THE 2022 LIBERTARIAN PARTY NATIONAL CONVENTION
Nugget Casino Resort, Reno, Nevada

Thursday, May 26, 2022
9:00 am - 7:00 pm
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
12:00 pm - 2:00 pm
2:30 pm - 4:30 pm
7:30 pm - 11:00 pm

Day of Education
Platform Committee
Bylaws Committee
LNC meeting
Opening reception

Friday, May 27, 2022
7:30 am
9:00 am
12:00 pm
1:30 pm
5:00 pm

Breakfast - Tom Woods
Call to Order
Welcome
Choir
Credentials Report
Adoption of Agenda
Treasurer’s Report
Audit Committee Report
Keynote Address - Justin Amash
In Memoriam
Bylaws Committee Report
Lunch - Scott Horton
Call to Order
Credentials Report
2020 VP candidate - Spike Cohen
Bylaws Committee report
Judicial Committee elections
Evening Adjournment

Regional Caucuses immediately following adjournment
6:00 - 7:00 pm
7:00 - 8:00 pm
8:00 - 10:00 pm

VC/officer candidate forum
Chair candidate debate
Torch Club

Additional activities & tours outside of the convention include:
All-day Yosemite National Park Tour
Reno Area Museums Tour
Grand Circle Tour
Lake Tahoe Dinner Cruise
Sunset Horseback Trail Ride with BBQ
Kayaking on Lake Tahoe
Zip Lining

More information to be added to the website soon!

Limited offer to the first 20 takers:
Upgrade any Nugget Casino & Resort guest room to Resort Tower Bar King Suite for up to 8 nights length of stay for only $499 contribution to the LP. First book a standard room at our convention rate with The Nugget, go to LNC2022.com/register and scroll down to “add-ons” for “Bar King Suite upgrade”
The convention schedule will be updated on the Eventee app regularly, even during the convention, so keep the app handy to find the latest changes, room assignments and even communicate with your fellow delegates.

There will not be a “Kids Camp” this year, a sort of child daycare we had at a few past conventions.

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*Convention schedule of events is subject to change

Get Your Tickets Today at LNC2022.COM

May 26-29, 2022

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Anyone working to earn Libertarians votes has encountered the “wasted vote”, “spoiler”, and “this election is too important” arguments against voting for a Libertarian candidate. These arguments are often more common than complaints about our platform or any particular candidate. Not many, except those outside two party politics, really consider how these arguments are a sign of voting manipulation. Excuses like these are also especially ironic when poll after poll shows people want more political choices. We have an opportunity here to point out how the old parties are manipulating voter choices, and to present a simple and effective solution to free their ballots: Approval Voting.

Approval Voting is very simple: You can approve of one or more candidates.

There are many different voting systems which all have different advantages and disadvantages. Unfortunately in the US we use a system called “First Past the Post.” This is an antiquated system for group decisions in general, and it is a poor mechanism for large groups of people in a representative government. The government uses the worst system and continues to do so because it serves those who derive power from it.” While almost any other system would be better, there are many arguments for why Approval Voting is the best system to support.

Approval Voting:
• Frees voters to express themselves
• Removes mental barriers keeping people away from alternatives
• Does not harm other choices when voting for a favorite candidate
• Keeps ballots simple and harder to spoil
• Allows more than one selection – an easy and low cost change in most voting systems
• Provides easy to understand results – a simple list of the candidates along with how many votes they received
• Tends to elect candidates who would beat all rivals head-to-head
• Trends away from negative voting and binary extremes we see in elections
• Gives an accurate measure of support for all candidates

We should not advocate for any voting system because it is “better for us” — this would make us little different from the existing duopoly. As with all our principles, we should advocate for a voting system because it is better at its purpose. It is better for the voters. Approval Voting gives the best direct number of support for any candidate. It removes the concerns old parties have of third-party or Independent choices being “spoilers” which keeps us in so many ballot access struggles. The ability to more directly measure candidate support helps parties become more competitive over time as voters support their choices more expressively. Approval Voting isn't best because it supports alternative parties, but because it supports voter choice over manipulation mechanisms.

Ending the “wasted” vote issue is really what Approval Voting does best. In voting systems, this issue is known as the Favorite Betrayal Criterion which means there is never an incentive to vote for a choice that is not your favorite. As mentioned, there are
many better, more advanced methods than our current system, but they can still fail on this important point. Approval Voting is a straightforward system that addresses this issue. Voters will be able to easily see the direct impact of their votes because vote results will be reported plainly and will be easily understood. They will be free to fully express their opinions on a ballot. Voters and politicians will also learn that “gaming the system” doesn’t work. If someone doesn't vote for a candidate they like, they hurt themselves. If someone votes for someone they didn't actually want they also hurt themselves. This means people also don't have to worry about how others will vote (See: Duverger’s Law for more info).

A side effect of Approval Voting is also that candidates will work to earn the most votes which is in contrast to our current system that encourages scaring people away from alternative options and appearing as “the lesser of two evils.” This could mean more positive campaigns in general and less skewing to the “left vs right” extremes we see in politics that leaves most of the independently minded voters behind and feeling like their votes do not matter. A new political environment where voters are put more in charge of outcomes would allow politics to be about ideas again. Approval Voting also effectively puts each candidate in a virtual “head to head” style competition since their direct support can be seen by all. This means that even if an alternative party is not the winner, all can still see the real support and influence that the party has with the voters. We want Libertarians to win. We are the most serious alternative option, and we have meaningful positions and principles that should impact elections regardless of a direct win. Approval Voting will make our positions harder to ignore since our real support could be seen over time.

Voters absolutely deserve a better system. Implementing any new system will be difficult not just due to difficulties in changing the law, but also because of politicians keeping a firm grip on what brings them the most power. The movement for voting system reform has gained some traction in recent years, which is good. It is good to keep an eye on what works for the voters versus what the politicians already in power are willing to change. Many of the political ruling class oppose Approval Voting over other alternatives for some of the reasons mentioned above. We all know the old parties do not want actual competition. The way they gerrymander and write ballot blocking laws makes it clear they do not care for voter choice. If we get this opportunity to actually reform our voting system, we should not let corrupt politicians employ sleight of hand. It is time for a better system – a principled system that works for voters. It is time for Approval Voting.

I have tried to avoid a lot of the complex examples and arguments here, but I do encourage those with interest in voting systems to look up further information at ElectionScience.org. This is the website for the Center for Election Science which is the largest advocate for Approval Voting in the United States. They have articles discussing many of the concerns and questions people have about voting systems in detail and comparisons between Approval Voting and other popular alternatives. The Center for Election Science was behind the 2018 initiative in Fargo, ND and the 2020 initiative in St. Louis, MO to implement Approval Voting.

Arthur Thomas IV has been a member of the Libertarian Party since 2005, a Lifetime Member since 2018, and has served as Historian for the Libertarian Party of Texas since 2014.
Congress, too, has passed landmark legislation, the First Step Act of 2018, to bring many of the successes of the states to the federal corrections system.

The steps taken by Congress and state legislatures are a tacit admission that the purportedly “tough on crime” policies of the 1980s and 1990s haven’t worked and that—as Libertarians have long recognized—the War on Drugs is a failure. The misguided policies of the past dramatically increased prison populations and pushed states and the federal government to spend more taxpayer dollars to essentially warehouse people.

Although there has been a change in the approach, there is much work to be done in the area of criminal justice reform to continue the progress that has been made.

One particular aspect of federal sentencing law that criminal justice reform advocates have targeted in the current Congress is the sentencing disparity between crack cocaine and powder cocaine. This sentencing disparity is one of the most archaic and draconian vestiges of the War on Drugs.

In 1986, with a midterm election quickly approaching and both parties looking to maximize their standing with voters, Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, an omnibus bill of “tough on crime” policies. At the time, there were concerns about “an epidemic” of crack cocaine and violence in inner cities. This was further heightened by the death of University of Maryland basketball star Len Bias, who, despite the media’s initial reporting that he had been consuming crack cocaine, died from a powder cocaine overdose.

One of the features of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act was the harsher treatment of crack cocaine compared to powder cocaine. Under the law, an individual convicted of trafficking under 50 grams of crack cocaine received a five-year mandatory minimum prison sentence while more than 50 grams triggered a ten-year sentence. Meanwhile, trafficking under 5 kilograms of powder cocaine carried the same five-year sentence and 5 kilograms or more carried a ten-year sentence — a 100-to-1 disparity between powder and crack cocaine.

This policy wasn’t based on any real scientific or reasoned logic. Crack is simply a different form of cocaine. As the U.S. Sentencing Commission has explained, “Crack cocaine is made by dissolving powder cocaine in a solution of sodium bicarbonate [baking powder] and water.” In terms of comparative addictiveness, the U.S. Sentencing Commission has noted that crack may be “more potentially addictive” because of how it’s administered but added, “[T]his is not a reliable basis for establishing longer penalties for crack cocaine, because powder cocaine may be injected and injection is even more likely to lead to addiction than is smoking.”

Eventually, Congress recognized their error and revisited the issue through the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010. The Fair Sentencing Act increased the quantities of crack necessary...
to trigger the mandatory minimums to 28 grams and 280 grams — an 18-to-1 ratio. Although this wasn’t the bill that he wanted, then Representative Ron Paul (R-TX) said during the debate in the House, “I am optimistic that [the Fair Sentencing Act] — even with its faults — may signal that Congress is ready to begin reversing course. It is imperative that the House of Representatives pursue a dialogue on how we can end the federal war on drugs — a war that has increasingly become a war on the American people and our Constitution.”

The Fair Sentencing Act passed the House and Senate without any opposition. Even a drug warrior like then Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) co-led and supported the legislation. However, the change applied to only current and future cases. This was eventually fixed by the First Step Act of 2018, which made the 18-to-1 ratio retroactive, applying it to people who had already been sentenced before the Fair Sentencing Act passed. This led to the resentencing of more than 3,700 people who were serving prison sentences under the 100-to-1 ratio.

Currently, Congress is once again reexamining the treatment of crack cocaine. Introduced by Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and supported by a bipartisan group of his colleagues, including Senator Rand Paul (R-KY), the Eliminating a Quantifiably Unjust Application of the Law (EQUAL) Act (S. 79) would eliminate the sentencing disparity between crack cocaine and powder cocaine and make the change retroactive.

The House version of the EQUAL Act already passed in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 361 to 66. Even with the bipartisan support that the EQUAL Act enjoys, there are political games being played because of dishonest actors in Congress and special interest groups that have a vested interest in locking more people up.

Although there is no shortage of good criminal justice reform legislation introduced in this Congress, the EQUAL Act stands out as one that would have an incredible impact and finally eliminate this unjust vestige of the War on Drugs.

Jason Pye is the director of rule of law initiatives for the Due Process Institute and a member of the Libertarian Party.
Students For Individual Liberty Celebrates 35 Years of Activity

by Laryssa Gaughen

Students for Individual Liberty at the University of Virginia is celebrating its 35th consecutive year of activity during the 2021-2022 academic year. According to various sources, SIL is the longest-running continuously active Libertarian student organization in U.S. history.

“I am very proud of what SIL and its members have accomplished,” said Jim Lark, who founded the organization in 1987 while a Ph.D. student at the university and now serves as its faculty advisor. “I believe SIL has contributed substantially to the Libertarian movement. Several members have worked for Libertarian movement organizations, or run for office as Libertarians.”

He mentioned that while SIL is a nonpartisan educational organization, the group’s efforts have helped the Libertarian Party in the greater Charlottesville community. “SIL was responsible for LP presidential candidate Ron Paul’s speech at UVa in February 1988. This was the first of many activities in which SIL helped the LP while remaining a nonpartisan organization.”

Dr. Lark said the LP and other liberty movement organizations provided assistance to SIL. “From the beginning, the LP has been very supportive of our efforts. SIL's first major public event featured LP News editor Karl Hess. Don Ernsberger and Dave Walter were very helpful to us in their capacities as leaders in both the LP and the Society for Individual Liberty. Vince Miller and Jim Elwood of Libertarian International (now Liberty International) and Tom Palmer of the Institute for Humane Studies helped us greatly. Cato, the Reason Foundation, and the Foundation for Economic Education were very generous in providing material to us.”

Dr. Lark noted that SIL has achieved national attention on several occasions. In September 1989, SIL conducted a protest at the 'Education Summit' at UVa, which featured President George Bush and the fifty state governors. CNN and other national media mentioned SIL’s protest against the ‘welfare/warfare state.’

“During the summit, I spoke to Peter Jennings of ABC News. I informed him that ABC’s 1988 election night coverage erased the LP presidential vote total in Alaska and recalculated the vote percentages so that the Bush and Dukakis percentages added to 100%. He responded that he was unaware of this misrepresentation, that it was improper, and that it wouldn't happen again.”

Dr. Lark also recounted the attention SIL received after “Operation Equinox” in March 1991, when local, state, and federal law enforcement arrested students on drug charges and seized three UVa fraternity houses. “SIL was the only organization that immediately spoke out against the ‘War on Drugs,’ the arrests, and seizures. Several media organizations interviewed SIL representatives about these issues.”

Dr. Lark said that at various times, SIL and fellow Libertarian groups at UVa have been sufficiently successful that their efforts have drawn grudging acknowledgement from ideological opponents. Shortly before the 1992 presidential election, an op-ed by UVa student Justin Brookman in the University Journal newspaper began as follows:

“The College Libertarians play far too large a role at this University. With their mass mailings, huge publicity and constant pumping of their Marrou/Lord ticket, one might think that the Libertarian Party was bigger than the Democrats or Republicans. In fact, at college campuses across America, their cause has picked up support.”

Dr. Lark noted that when the op-ed was published, 99% of the work for SIL was done by three people (Jim Lark, Bill Olinger, and Boris Starosta); only Mr. Olinger was a student.

In recounting his experiences, Dr. Lark expressed pride at the manner in which SIL and its members have conducted their affairs. “I have always emphasized that we must treat people with courtesy and respect, and we must observe the highest standards of intellectual integrity. In particular, we must apply the same withering scrutiny to our own ideas that we apply to the ideas of those with whom we disagree. Because we have done so, I know that many people now have a much more favorable view of Libertarians and Libertarian ideas.”

He said Libertarians should be encouraged by the success of Students For Liberty, an international Libertarian student organization. “As SFL Board of Advisors member and speaker at many of their major conferences, I have seen first-hand SFL’s great work. I believe this work is already bearing fruit for the LP.”

Dr. Lark emphasized that he is happy to work with those promoting the LP among students. “Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance to your efforts.”

(Editor’s note: Dr. Lark is the LNC’s representative to the International Alliance of Libertarian Parties and the national campus coordinator for the LP. He served several terms on the Libertarian National Committee; he served as LNC chair during the 2000-2002 term.)
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In November 2020, Marshall Burt was elected to the Wyoming House of Representatives by voters from the state's 39th district — as a Libertarian. He didn't run as a member of one of the duopoly parties and then switch his label after securing the election. He proudly campaigned as a Libertarian and he was elected as a Libertarian. That night, Marshall shut down a lot of voices who liked to squawk that a Libertarian could never win a [meaningful] election. We already knew this wasn't true, but Marshall made it undeniable again.

The past two years have been invigorating. Representative Burt didn't come in on a wrecking ball, but he meekly and respectfully took his place without an ally in the whole room. He built relationships with his new colleagues by finding the things they agreed on, without compromising his principles. Before long it was Marshall's support that many looked for when whipping votes for a bill or drawing a redistricting map.

In October 2021, Marshall addressed the entire chamber as they were preparing to vote on a bill that was forced through at the last second of a special session, and that would prohibit private companies from imposing policies surrounding the COVID-19 vaccine. This issue was personal for Marshall. Not only does he vehemently oppose the mandates that President Joe Biden was rolling out at the time, but his own employer was threatening to fire anyone who was not complying with their own vaccine mandate — something Marshall had chosen not to do.

However, when given the opportunity to vote in a way that would have helped secure his own employment and well-being, Representative Burt chose his principles instead. In an emotional, 7-minute speech, Marshall eloquently and empathetically expressed that if we are to oppose infringement of individual liberty from the federal government, that cannot come by way of infringement of individual liberty from the state government. He recounted parts of his message in a follow up op-ed:

"Federal mandates of any kind infringe upon our Liberty, ignore the 10th Amendment, and empower bureaucracy that is often more far-reaching than intended. State mandates of any kind infringe upon our Liberty, they ignore the often-forgotten 9th Amendment, and they empower bureaucracy that is often more far-reaching than intended. While in Cheyenne, I will diligently watch to ensure that we are not trading the heavy hand of the federal government for the heavy hand of the state government."

Representative Burt was a clear example of what it truly looks like to stand on principle. Shortly after his speech, Marshall received a call from his employer, Union Pacific Railroad, letting him know they were relaxing their vaccine mandates on employees in Wyoming.

In only the first couple months of 2022 Marshall has accomplished even more for his constituents and for the reputation of the Libertarian Party. Wyoming is one of the states that is still unfortunately very behind on legalization of cannabis. For that reason Marshall sponsored House Bill 143 that would legalize the plant for medicinal use. While polls have shown upwards of 85% of residents support medical marijuana, this bill is still awaiting needed support from the House. However more success has been shown for House Bill 81, which is authored by Representative Burt and has tri-partisan support. Current Wyoming state law regulates handlebar height for motorcycles and other vehicles with handlebars. This has, perhaps unintentionally, prevented manufacturers from selling products that support the needs of people with certain disabilities. It also of course is simply an unnecessary government regulation. If passed, the bill would remove these regulations entirely. HB 81 has already secured the maximum allowed 15 co-sponsors which include the Speaker of the House, and the majority and minority whips, and has passed through the House and Senate unanimously, awaiting only the Governor's signature. Marshall has clearly struck gold here.

Perhaps most notably of all on February 16, 2022, Wyoming House of Representatives Speaker Eric Barlow named the Libertarian Party an official minority party in the state.
legislature for the first time in state history — indeed this is perhaps the first time this has been officially done in any state. This was done when he announced that Representative Burt had been appointed to the Corporations Committee, a distinguished honor unheard of for freshman representatives.

Marshall Burt is not only showing his colleagues and constituents what a level-headed voice not caught up in petty party politics can accomplish, but he is an example to each and every Libertarian who is seeking office or recently elected. This is how we win. This is how we bring about real change. This is how we ensure that there is a strong party fighting for the rights of the individual for the next 50 years.

We are at an amazing and desperately important moment in our Party’s life — which is confirmed by the efforts being made from the duopoly and from fringe interest groups to render us ineffective. They fear that instead of hearing their false claims of all we can’t accomplish, people will see all of the things we are actually accomplishing when reasonable, peaceful Libertarians are elected and respectfully get to work. This must be our mission, we must press on, and thankfully we can look to Representative Burt any time we need to be reminded of this.

Call for Nominations: 2022 Libertarian Party Awards

To be presented during the 2022 LP National Convention in Sparks, Nevada.

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 per national convention.

Award 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 Sunday, April 10, 2022. 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 2022 LP national convention.
Libertarian Party News (ISSN 8755-139X) is the official newspaper of the Libertarian Party of the United States. Opinions and articles published in this newspaper do not necessarily represent official party positions unless so indicated.

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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