LP’s help requested by U.S. House committee

The Chairman of the powerful Congressional Committee on Government Reform and Oversight has asked the Libertarian Party to help the Republicans’ efforts to downsize the federal government.

The LP was asked to suggest expert witnesses and provide publicity for a series of public hearings which will be held around the country to focus attention on ways to make the federal government “smaller, more responsible, and more fiscally accountable.”

The request for assistance was made on June 28th by Congressman William Clinger (R-PA) at a Capitol Hill meeting. In attendance were organizations that have thrown their support behind the committee’s efforts—including the National Taxpayer’s Union, Citizens Against Government Waste, and the Business Roundtable.

“This is exciting,” said LP Director of Communications Bill Winter. “It gives us an opportunity, however small, to encourage the Republicans to actually fulfill their promise to reduce the size of government.”

The Committee’s next scheduled public hearing will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina on July 28th. Winter said the National LP would try to notify state parties about hearings, and attempt to arrange for Libertarians in public office to attend the hearings as expert witnesses.

“We want the Libertarian perspective—the true voice of downsizing government—to be heard,” he said.

CA Libertarians help defeat $34 million school bond

Libertarians in Lake Elsinore, California, played a pivotal role in the defeat of a school bond in June—saving local taxpayers $34 million.

Riverside County LP Vice Chair Gene Trosper organized a group called STOP (Stop Taxpayer Obligation Propositions) to fight the bond proposal. “While hitting the usual ‘no more taxes’ argument, STOP continually and effectively focused attention upon wasteful and needless projects,” said Trosper.

The final vote was 55.5% against the bond. “Libertarians scored a major victory by successfully defeating[this] measure,” said Trosper.

Harry Browne invited to CityVote TV debate

Harry Browne, a candidate for the Libertarian Party presidential nomination, has been invited to appear in the first televised presidential debate of the 1996 election season on October 8th—along with President Bill Clinton and Senator Robert Dole.

The invitation came from CityVote, which is conducting a nationwide presidential preferential primary in 18 cities around the country on November 7th, 1995.

The first televised debate will be held in Minneapolis-Saint Paul on Sunday, October 8th, and is scheduled to be broadcast by PBS and C-SPAN. A second debate is planned for October 22nd and a third for November 5th.

In all, 12 candidates qualified for the CityVote primary and debate, although there is no guarantee they will participate. Included are Republicans Dole, Phil Gramm, Lamar Alexander, Pat Buchanan, Bob Dornan, Alan Keyes, Richard Lugar, Arlen Specter and Pete Wilson. Democrats Clinton and Lyndon LaRouche also qualified. Browne was the only third party candidate to meet the criteria.

CityVote—which bills itself as “A National Urban Presidential Primary”—is a non-binding presidential preference poll, conducted in conjunction with local elections. Participating cities include Spokane, WA; St. Paul, MN; Baltimore, MD; Minneapolis, MN; Boston, MA; Tucson, AZ; and Boulder, CO. Other cities expressing interest include San Francisco, Houston, San Diego, and Cleveland.

“This is an exciting first for a Libertarian presidential candidate,” said Browne campaign director Sharon Ayres.

Rothhaus back in office in NH

Former New Hampshire State Representative Finlay Rothhaus has been returned to office as a Selectman in his hometown of Merrimack. Rothhaus finished in first place for two open seats in the May 9th election, more than 700 votes in front of the incumbent.

“To be honest, I expected to win. But I didn’t think it would be by such a large margin,” said Rothaus, who had been identified by local newspapers as a Libertarian in the non-partisan race.

Rothhaus switched to the LP as a seated GOP state legislator in 1992, was re-elected as a Libertarian later that year, but fell short in his re-election bid in 1994.
Libertarians, Perot Group Offer Voters 2-Party System Option

By DOUG CURTIS

Voters 2-Party System Option

"Fund raising is going to be utmost," however, in gaining office, Shell said.

The platform will emphasize the party's goal of limiting government growth and promoting personal freedom and responsibility, he said.

But the national Libertarian Party has been able to secure the state legal threshold for ballot status by winning more than 7 percent of the popular vote in the state legislature. No Libertarians have ever held partisan office in the state, although they've had candidates on the ballot in various years for 20 years.

Outgoing state chairman Phil Har- rard of Springfield led the party for the past three years. He did not seek re-election, but he said Monday he would remain an active member.

Election results were released as follows:

- **First Place (Libertarian)**: Scott T. Johnson of Springfield
- **Second Place (Republican)**: cranberry
- **Third Place (Democratic)**: Bill Cole

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No independents day

Americans say they want more choices when they go into the voting booth, but Republicans and Democrats are trying to make it harder for independent or third-party candidates to get on the ballot.

“It’s pretty depressing, after years of improvement,” said Richard Winger, who heads the San Francisco-based Coalition for Free and Open Elections, which monitors ballot-access issues. “This is the worst year since 1971, when 11 states made it tougher for independents to run.”

So far this year Alaska, Idaho and New Mexico have made ballot access more difficult, and Alabama, Illinois and Maine are considering doing so. In Georgia, Arizona and New Hampshire, unsuccessful efforts were made to tighten access rules. In one state, Maryland, an attempt to make access easier failed.

“I think what’s happening is a disaster,” said Denise DuBois, director of the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, a nonpartisan think tank that keeps track of voter registration and participation. She said that voters were “hungry for the possibility of other choices” and that limiting “those other choices undermines the political system.”

Bill Winter, spokesman for the Libertarian Party, said that so many legislative efforts were “a sign that establishment politicians are running scared, determined to strangle their competition. Both parties feel insecure.”

For good reason. Over the last 30 years, many Americans have abandoned their parties and registered as independents. In 1994, the number of registered Democrats dropped to 31.8 percent of eligible voters; the number of Republicans declined to 22.6 percent, and the number of registered independents rose to 12.4 percent of eligible voters.

Last fall, 16 of the 20 Senate contests and nearly half of the 146 competitive House races included independent or third-party candidates — more than in any midterm election since the 1960s.

Libertarians gain voters upset with major parties

By Janet Naylor

Jesse Markowitz passed over the Democratic and Republican parties to join the Libertarian Party of Maryland because he “got tired of voting against people.”

“It’s getting tougher and tougher to tell them apart,” Mr. Markowitz said of the established parties. “People are saying, ‘There’s got to be somebody out there I can vote for.’”

He hopes to make that the Libertarian Party, which this month became the third officially recognized political party in Maryland.

That recognition, granted by state election officials after Libertarians turned in 10,000 petition signatures in support of their cause, entitles them to have their party listed on Maryland’s voter registration forms.

The major parties don’t appear to be in any immediate danger from the Libertarians, who now number 300 or so dues-paying members. But the recognition comes as a growing number of voters are refusing to affiliate themselves with the established parties, leaving tens of thousands of potential swing voters in the state.

In the first four months of this year, 20 percent of the 62,353 new voters in the state chose the “decline” option, Maryland’s equivalent of “none of the above” for party affiliation on voter-registration forms. Before that, less than 10 percent of registering voters chose the “decline” option.

One reason for the difference may be the federal “motor voter” law that took effect in January. The law, which makes it easier to register by allowing registration at motor vehicle offices or through the mail, may be bringing otherwise disenfranchised voters into the process, say political observers.

That could give Libertarians and independents a hand, while making the major parties a headache.

“They [the major parties] no longer particularly stand for anything. People feel they just don’t have any choice anymore,” said Joan Vinson, state chairman of United We Stand Maryland, an arm of Ross Perot’s 1992 independent presidential bid.

“We have the reality here that we hardly have a second party in Maryland, said Mrs. Vinson. That kind of talk is particularly alarming to the state’s Republicans, who posted their best showing in decades in the November elections.

“We’re going to have to prove to them that we are different,” said Joyce Lyons Terhes, the state GOP chairman.

The Republicans’ election gains — they came within a whisker of the governor’s office and made huge advances in county and State House elections — came after years in which the party steadily chipped away at the longtime Democratic dominance in Maryland voter registration.

After years in which Democratic registration outstripped GOP registration by 2-1 or more, new registrations since January have recorded one Republican voter for every 1.3 Democrats.

Democrats still hold a 2-1 edge overall, but the party is working to increase its numbers at a pace not seen in recent years.

“We certainly are focusing some increased attention on reaching out to new voters,” said Richard Parsons, the party’s executive director. “That is safe to say I don’t think we can take anything granted.”

Indeed, the Republican revolution on Capitol Hill seems to be reinvigorating Maryland Democrats, especially younger voters. Where the party once had only a few Young Democrats chapters, there is now one in all 24 jurisdictions, Mr. Parsons said.

“Young voters see [the GOP agenda] as kind of extremist and dangerous to their own interests,” he said.

And as federal cutbacks start to be felt in the state’s government-dependent economy, voters will turn back toward the Democratic Party, he predicted.

These cuts have “more of an impact on average Joe Maryland than anyone else in the country,” Mr. Parsons said. “When Newt Gingrich sneezes, we’re going to get double pneumonia.”

To Mr. Markowitz, of Gaithersburg, that kind of thinking is the problem. He hopes that his party, with its emphasis on smaller government, can capture new members in Maryland by portraying itself as a viable alternative to the “business as usual” major parties.

Libertarians like Delaware primary

DOVER — Dan Beaver, recently elected chairman of the Libertarian Party of Delaware, said the newly established provisions for holding presidential primary elections in Delaware is a positive step.

“This provision elevates Delaware to the political status it deserves,” he said. “It’s in the spirit of inclusion, along the tradition of Returns Day in Sussex County. It’s a tradition that should be followed nationally.”

Party vice-chairman Richard Schwartzman said, “All in all, it’s a good law because it allows for reasonable participation by political parties other than Republican and Democrats.”

Unfortunately, the bill doesn’t go far enough, Dan Beaver said and I agree with Sen. (William V.) Roth (R-Del.) that the Delaware primaries should be the first in the country because Delaware was the first state,” he said.
Democrats, GOP Agree on This: Strangle Rivals

The two major political parties may or may not know how to solve the nation’s problems, but they give themselves credit for this much: They know how to stay alive.

When Mr. Perot made the most serious challenge to two-party dominance in a generation in 1992, and today his United We Stand America organization is pondering whether to become a third party. His effort has energized third parties and squashed new ones. At least three powerful American figures — Mr. Perot, Jesse Jackson and John Powell — could try running as third-party or independent candidates for president in 1996. One national poll shows that half of Americans think a third party would be a good idea.

So Democrats and Republicans around the country are responding the way big organizations do: They are trying to strangle the competition.

In at least 10 states already this year, legislators have introduced bills to make it more difficult for independent or third-party candidates to get onto ballots. The new requirements range from the minor to the major. One state, Alabama, is considering legislation that would cut or eliminate all ballot-access issues. In the other 10, it is either a nuisance or a major problem, says Bill Winter, a spokesman for the Libertarian Party, one of the old hands at trying to get on ballots. "It’s all conspircacy. All these Democrats and Republicans sat down independently and said, ‘How can we keep Perot off the ballot or out of the political race?’"

The Libertarian Party believes governments must not violate the rights of the individual. It advocates democracy through individual choice, breakthroughs in government power and the free-market economy.

Bill Johnson, executive director of the Missouri Libertarian Party, spoke of reconciling the party split between the old-party traditionalists and the new-party activists.

Those in attendance seemed to be one of mind, as they joked about the current political situation and the public’s traditional ignorance of their party. A spirit of camaraderie prevailed, and members rallied together to brainstorm Mr. Perot’s increased party recognition.

The Libertarian Party says it is the fastest-growing party in the United States, growing at a rate of more than 2 percent of the vote in a statewide election. About 2 million people voted Libertarian in the 1992 presidential election, said Steve Desbach, National Chairman of the party. In addition, 109,000 registered Libertarian voters exist nationally, with 146 Libertarians holding elected or appointed offices.

"We are going to double our membership at the next national convention from what it was at the last one," Desbach predicted. "We will not be kept off the ballot or out of the political race.

Johnson attributes this to the public’s dissatisfaction with the two main political parties. "People are so jaded. No matter who you vote for — Republican or Democrat — the bureaucracy remains the same," he said.

Desbach emphasized the party’s views on individualism. "If we don’t advocate any individual choice," Desbach said, "We advocate your right to make those choices.

Desbach and Johnson followed guest speakers Jo Jorgensen and Mike Ginsberg. Jorgensen, who is seeking the 1996 Libertarian Party vice-presidential nomination, spoke about her belief that Republican politicians are selling out freedom. She compared Republican politicians to phone-sex operators, who tease, tempt and arouse people but have nothing to offer them except large bills.

"Government has failed us," she said. "Every time the government does the private sector can do so much more efficiently, more effectively and with less cost.

Ginsberg, who is the chair of the Illinois Libertarian Party Committee, was the final speaker and recounted his recent trip to the Serb-dominated region of the former Yugoslavia.

Arizona Libertarian to run for president

A Time when there is lots of speculation about a third-party or independent presidential candidate in 1996, this is more than just a footnote. It is a reminder that independent presidential campaigns are a heck of a lot easier to talk about than to actually mount.

It is also important to remember that, by ratcheting up the requirement for third parties or independent candidates to get on the ballot, states aren’t simply constructing barriers. They are taking the frustration of those who want to change things and making them even higher.

When Mr. Perot decided to run for president in 1992, his staff calculated that he had to gather more than 700,000 signatures to make it onto the ballot in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. That’s some 27 times more signatures than a Republican candidate has to gather, calculates Clarence Evjen, an official of the tiny New Law Party, which has made it his business to track ballot-access issues.

Mr. Evjen argues that to run a national slate of candidates for the House, a new party would have to get more than 1.6 million signatures to meet state requirements — 10 times more than a Democratic candidate had to get. The Libertarian Party calculates that to go further and field a full slate of both federal and statewide candidates, a third party in 1994 would have needed to collect 3.5 million valid petition signatures.

To see what this means inside a state, look at the new Patriot Party in Pennsylvania. Last year, its statewide candidates had to gather and submit 26,000 signatures to get on the November ballot, calculates John K. Brown, state chairman.

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Arizona Libertarian to run for president

MESA — The former chairman of Arizona’s Libertarian Party says he’s running for president.

Tovo Tompkins, 59, yesterday said in announcing his candidacy that he opposes all forms of gun control.

Tompkins also said he wants to cut or eliminate all taxes, legalize drugs and terminate U.S. membership in the United Nations.

Westover man named Libertarian official

A Westover man has been elected as vice-chair of the Libertarian Party for the 1st district in West Virginia.

Bob Jones was appointed recently in Hurricane, according John K. Brown, state chairman.

Two other vice chairs have also been appointed, "due to increasing membership, growing interest in the party, and more party activities," Brown said in a press release.

Bill Clem of Charles Town will serve the 2nd district and Pat Adkins of Hart will serve in the 3rd district.

The new vice chairs will assist in membership drives, ballot access and public awareness.

More than 2.2 million votes were cast for Libertarian candidates for state and federal office in 1996, and more than 130 Libertarians serve in elected and appointed offices across the country.

In West Virginia, the Libertarian Party says it is the fastest growing party with dues paying membership increasing 56 percent in 1995.