

## NEWS RELEASE

# THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

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## Under their thumb: New government fingerprinting laws threaten freedom

*Will 1998 be the year the government gets your fingerprints?*

WASHINGTON, DC — Fingerprinting isn't just for criminals any more.

Thanks to Congress, 1998 may be the year that *you* will be fingerprinted — simply for the privilege of renewing your drivers license, the Libertarian Party noted today.

Already five states — California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, and Texas — require thumb prints as a condition of granting a drivers license. And many other state governments are expected to follow suit in 1998 because pilot programs authorized in the 1996 Defense Department funding bill are now taking effect.

**"Americans should give a unanimous thumbs-down to this new law,"** said Steve Dasbach, Libertarian Party chairman. "If we don't, your next trip to the Department of Motor Vehicles may resemble a booking on *NYPD Blue*: You'll be photographed and fingerprinted for the 'crime' of wanting to drive your own car."

**One possible danger of the new law:** The federal government could collect the fingerprints and add them to the massive database at the FBI Fingerprint Center — which now processes 14 million fingerprint identification requests a year. Congress already collects similar information to track deadbeat dads, prevent the hiring of illegal aliens, and other purposes.

"The government wants to fingerprint law-abiding citizens, just *in case* they commit a crime," Dasbach said. "But why not just require every American to post bail or hire an attorney in advance, just in case they commit a crime? Politicians always find lofty motives, such as protecting children or fighting crime, to write more laws. But in the end it's ordinary Americans — not criminals — who pay the price."

**Nationally, more than 1,000 state and federal laws now authorize fingerprinting** for purposes ranging from hiring lottery workers, janitors, day-care providers, nursing-home workers, and even tow truck drivers. That's a trend that must be reversed, said Dasbach.

"One of the protections that we have against invasive government power is its inability to keep track of us in every single thing we do. A drivers license that can serve as a national ID card, coupled with computerized databases, raises the frightening prospect of bureaucrats tracking us like products in a grocery store," he said.

**Did your Congressman vote for the fingerprint law?  
Call the Libertarian Party to find out.**