



THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

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Eleven Libertarians elected; party gains ballot status in four more states

WASHINGTON, DC —The Republican tidal wave that swept through Election '94 resulted in mixed — but generally upbeat — tidings for the Libertarian Party.

While eight Libertarians were elected to public office and three re-elected, several high-profile races ended with somewhat disappointing vote totals, and the New Hampshire Libertarian legislative delegation was reduced from four members to two.

The party won ballot status in Wyoming, South Dakota, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Indiana, and maintained it in every state except Utah. The party is now on the ballot in 23 states for 1996, its best-ever showing coming out of an off-presidential-year election.

“We made tremendous strides in the area of ballot access. It’s going to make a tremendous difference [for 1996],” said LP National Chair Steve Dasbach.

Libertarian candidates won 396,000 votes for Congress, 648,000 votes for U.S. Senate, and 416,000 for governor. In all, it is estimated that more than 2.2 million people cast votes for Libertarian candidates.

“In the face of the Republican onslaught and a massive erosion of Democratic support, Libertarians in general held their share of the vote, or, in some cases, expanded it,” said Dasbach.

Libertarian winners included Jim McClarin, New Hampshire House of Representatives; Marrice Aho, Mololla City Council, Oregon; Dan Gallegos, Regional Transportation District Board, District N, Colorado; David Morris, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2F, Washington, DC; Daniel Walker and Dick Bjornseth, Ochlockonee Soil & Water Conservation District Board, Florida; Tom Jamerson, Chesterfield County Soil & Water Commission, Virginia; and Steve

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Ziegler, Charles County Board of Education, Maryland.

Re-elected were Don Gorman, New Hampshire House of Representatives; Bonnie Flickinger, Moreno Valley City Council, California; and Sandy Webb, Simi Valley City Council, California.

On the negative side, two incumbent State Representatives in New Hampshire were defeated; Andy Borsa and Finlay Rothhaus, cutting the Libertarian delegation in half. But the Steve Winter for governor campaign garnered 4.5% of the vote, ensuring continued "major party" status in New Hampshire, and preserving a Libertarian presidential primary in 1996.

"Obviously, the one disappointment about the election was the reduction of our delegation in New Hampshire," said Dasbach. "But, in hind sight, it's clear that the Republicans and Democrats learned from our past successes, and were able to effectively block us this election. Now the challenge for us is to learn from their success, and come back even stronger in the next election."

Several highly touted campaign opportunities ended with lower than expected results: Jon Coon for U.S. Senate in Michigan won 4.5% of the vote, and Guy Wilson for U.S. Congress in California (District 37), in a two-way race against an indicted Democrat, won 21.9%.

The best Libertarian results in major three-way races were: Governor, Winter in New Hampshire (4.5%); U.S. Senate, Scott Grainger in Arizona (7%); and U.S. Congress, Joseph Jacobs, Jr. in Ohio (10%).

The highest Libertarian vote percentage in a partisan statewide race was Sharon Harris in Georgia for Agricultural Commission (23%). The highest Libertarian vote total was John Hawley for Texas Supreme Court (592,199 votes).

In other closely watched races around the country, Terry Savage for State Assembly in California won 6.9%; Don Ernsberger for U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania won 1.7%; Mike Hurley for State Representative in Missouri won 27%; John Reda for State Representative in Delaware won 18%; Scott Kjar for State Assembly in Nevada won 6%; Paul Pratt for State Assembly in Nevada won 27%; and Robert Heitner for Sussex County Freeholder in New Jersey won 19%.

Looking at the election from an ideological perspective, Dasbach said, "This election is being interpreted as a move in a Libertarian direction. If you look at what the Republicans say the election means, they are all talking about cutting back the size of government, the intrusiveness of government. I mean, I'm highly skeptical that the Republicans will actually do anything to cut back government, but clearly that's what they believe the people wanted."

Dasbach also said he wasn't completely surprised that voters angry with big government didn't automatically vote for Libertarians. "It's clear that voters thought the Democrats have failed. It's reasonable that [voters] would now give the Republicans a chance before they would be willing to trust a new party. This is an expected process that we have to go through," he said.