

Op-Ed

Submitted by the
Libertarian Party

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DO YOU WANT SMALLER GOVERNMENT?

IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IN THIS ELECTION

**BY HARRY BROWNE, LIBERTARIAN PARTY
CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT (750 WORDS)**

The most important political question you can ask yourself in this election is simply this: Do you want smaller government?

Do you want an end to the welfare state, to government destroying our health-care system, to government at all levels taking 47% of the national income in taxes, to government intrusions into your life and your business?

Do you want smaller government? If you do, the first step toward getting it is obvious: You must stop supporting those who are making government bigger. You can't go east by moving west. It's a physical impossibility. You can't make government smaller by rewarding those who make government bigger. It's a political impossibility. Only when you begin asking for what you really want do you have any chance of getting it.

Al Gore wants to make government bigger. He's proposed a long list of new government programs. George W. Bush wants to make government bigger. He's proposed an equally long list of new government programs to show that he's as compassionate as Mr. Gore — as though having government spend your money somehow demonstrates compassion. Pat Buchanan says he wants a return to constitutional government. But he's made no specific proposals to reduce government.

I am the only presidential candidate offering specific proposals to make government smaller — much smaller: I want to get the federal government *completely* out of every area where it's made such a mess — health care, education, law enforcement, welfare, foreign aid, gun control, corporate welfare, highway boondoggles, farm subsidies.

I want to make the federal government so small you won't pay any income tax. The tariffs and excise taxes already being collected are enough to finance the constitutional functions of government.

I want to free you immediately and completely from the Social Security system. I want to sell off government assets to finance private retirement accounts for anyone now dependent on Social Security — so you and I and every other American can immediately stop paying the 15% Social Security tax.

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I want to end the nightmare of Prohibition by stopping the insane War on Drugs. At least 90% of the invasions of your civil liberties over the last 30 years have been justified by the Drug War. You may have no interest in drugs, but the government still snoops in your bank account, monitors your e-mail, and claims the power to search and seize your property without due process.

In short, I don't want to *slow* the growth of government. I don't even want to *stop* the growth of government. I want to *reduce* government dramatically — to the limits imposed by the Constitution.

I want you to be free to live your life as you want to live it — not as Al Gore or George Bush thinks you should. You're the one who gets up every morning and goes to work for 8, 10, or 12 hours a day. How dare politicians like George Bush or Al Gore presume to decide how much of your money you should be allowed to keep? I want you to be able to keep every dollar you earn — to spend it, save it, give it away as you think best — not just the crumbs the politicians leave for you.

Isn't that what you want? If so, why would you vote for someone who's made it clear he intends to make government bigger, not smaller?

Can I win? Perhaps not. But if you vote for anyone else, you won't win either. Your candidate might win, but you won't get what you want. Government will continue to get bigger, more expensive, and more intrusive — and you will have given your approval to this.

No matter what your reason for voting for Mr. Bush or Mr. Gore, your vote will be interpreted as an endorsement of every big-government proposal your candidate has made.

No one can misinterpret a vote for me as a vote for more government.

And if I get even one million votes, it could change politics in America forever. It could cause the press to pay more attention to smaller-government proposals, it could encourage other voters to abandon the big-government parties, and it could attract millions of non-voters who have given up on any hope of getting smaller government.

Please don't let the old parties destroy your future by scaring you into voting against someone this year. Vote in a way that could lead to a free America with a constitutional government before the end of this decade.

For once, vote for yourself instead of a politician. Vote for freedom. Vote Libertarian.

Harry Browne, of Franklin, Tennessee, is the Libertarian candidate for president.

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NOTE: A photograph of Mr. Browne and an electronic version of this essay are available. Call Press Secretary George Getz at (202) 333-0008 Ext. 222 for more information.