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## [LIBERTARIAN running for ARLINGTON BOARD of SUPERVISORS SEAT! MEET EVAN BERNICK](#)

Posted on January 5, 2014. Tags: [campaign](#), [government](#), [national](#), [office](#), [price](#), [taxes](#)



I have hot news: A Libertarian is running in Arlington for the Board of Supervisors! Yes behind enemy lines in Northern Virginia, we have a voice of liberty!

Evan Bernick has [this website](#) and this [FB page](#), too. Here's the bio from his website:

I moved to Arlington in 2011 after graduating from the University of Chicago Law School. I've spent the last three years at non-profits, researching, writing about, and supporting litigation efforts in defense of, individuals who have been victimized by

government overreach. I'm currently a visiting legal fellow at a free market think tank.

Here's Evan's [page](#) at Heritage Foundation. I especially liked [this article](#) about the extreme criminalization of the whale researcher. And the University of Chicago Law School is one of the top schools in the nation.

This is neither a blog endorsement nor a personal one but in keeping with my promise to give fair press to LPs running (especially in the Commonwealth) for office. It is likely based on some deep background I have that the GOP will not even run a candidate but there is a Democratic primary with three candidates and at least one independent running (John Vihstadt – [here's the Post article](#) on his announcement and note several office-holders support him) and possibly an Independent Green, too. That would be an interesting situation if there were two or three liberal or liberal-leaning or establishment candidates and one liberty candidate. 40% might win it. Nearly 4,000 people (3934 – 5.8%) voted for Sarvis in Arlington County. In a special election, turnout is light. We'll see what happens.

Here's my blog interview with Evan:

### ***What led you to run for office?***

I'm running for office because I'm concerned about Arlington's political culture and optimistic about the possibility of changing that culture. Simply put, I think that there's too much group-think on the Board, and not enough willingness to challenge assumptions about what's good for taxpayers.

Take the Columbia Pike streetcar project, for instance. The Board is proud of Arlington's national leadership in transit-oriented development. But I'm concerned that, with the exception of Libby Garvey, no one on the Board is challenging the assumptions that (1) building the streetcar is the only way to bring growth to Columbia Pike and (2) the project will be worth the price tag. Does the need for reliable public transportation in Columbia Pike that will promote development justify the financial burden that the streetcar would impose upon taxpayers throughout Arlington? I've yet to hear a compelling explanation of why an articulated bus system, which would cost hundreds of millions of dollars less, wouldn't effectively serve the same need.

I'm confident that supporters of the streetcar are acting in good faith. I don't believe that this is just a means of boosting property values in Columbia Pike at the expense of everyone in Arlington. But I don't think this project is a good investment—particularly given that streetcars have undershot ridership expectations and exceeded cost estimates in other cities, and that we wouldn't be able to have a dedicated lane of traffic for the streetcar.

I think that Arlingtonians could benefit from a new pair of eyes on the Board that would evaluate such projects objectively—someone who is prepared to consider every project on its own merits, challenge assumptions, and listen to people, regardless of who they are or what ideological commitments they might have.

### ***What items or issues are you going to push or are important to Arlington County?***

I think the most important thing we need to do in Arlington is to promote a political culture that's responsible and responsive. I don't want people to be surprised by what their government ends up doing with their money, and I don't want them to be brushed off by Board members when they raise legitimate concerns about how their money is being spent. I'm hopeful that I'll be able to bring a fresh perspective, and one that represents Arlington's growing Millennial population—we're the largest demographic group in Arlington right now, and we have unique concerns that the Board should be attuned to. Many of us, for instance, have children, and we want to ensure that Arlington continues to have some of the best education options in the nation.

### ***Do you plan to have ways to actually cut spending and taxes in Arlington?***

I plan to take the same approach towards any spending proposal that comes before me. In each case, I will ask whether there's a problem to be solved, whether the government should solve it, and whether a proposed solution is worth the price tag. I think it would be presumptuous for me to take office with a determination to cut certain things. I'm not going to jump to conclusions. I'm going to stay open-minded.

As for taxes, it's often said that we have low real estate tax rates in comparison to other counties. But the amount of taxes collected by the government has gone up over the years, even when tax rates do not. While property values have increased, it doesn't follow that because our property is more valuable, the needs of government grow proportionally. We closed out the fiscal year budget with a surplus of \$25 million. That doesn't mean that the government is being a responsible custodian of our money. It means that we're overtaxed.

If elected, I will do everything I can to ensure that the Board does not collect property taxes that exceed the needs of government, and that if it does, it will return our money to us.

### ***I noticed Laura Delhomme is your campaign manager – nice move! Will other LP leaders such as Rob Sarvis help you?***

I have a great deal of respect for Robert Sarvis, although I've never met him personally. If he's willing to help me, I'd certainly welcome his assistance.

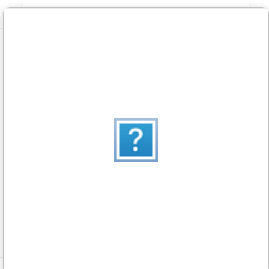
## Do you see this campaign as retail politics (door to door) or ad/TV/radio politics?

My campaign is going to be defined by personal engagement. I'll take advantage of any opportunity to speak with voters about what they consider to be important and to share my vision for Arlington.

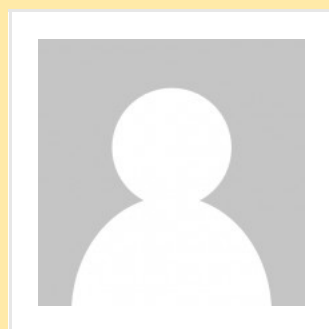
## Will you speak to state and national questions?

I'll speak to any question that falls within the scope of my duties as a Board member. But I don't plan to use my position to sound off about any opinion I have. That would take valuable time away from my other duties, and that time is taxpayer money. While there are state and national issues that obviously affect Arlington, I think that Board members should be focused on what they have jurisdiction over. Using the Board as a platform for national issues isn't fair to the people who pay their salaries.

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### About [Elwood Sanders](#)

Elwood "Sandy" Sanders is a Hanover attorney who is an Appellate Procedure Consultant for Lantagne Legal Printing and has written ten scholarly legal articles. Sandy was also Virginia's first Appellate Defender and also helped bring curling in VA! (None of these titles imply any endorsement of Sanders' views)

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