



Georgia Libertarian

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State Legislators Speak Out!



Let's Have Ballot Access Diversity

by State Representative Tyrone Brooks (D)

We must give thanks and pay homage to the late Rev. Primus King of Columbus, Georgia for having the courage to challenge the all-white Democrat Primary Law with a federal lawsuit against the Democrat Party of Georgia 1945. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed with Rev. King that this system was discriminatory and unconstitutional. That ruling in 1948 was the beginning of the end of the segregationist all-white primary laws across the South. Rev. King was threatened with death. The Ku Klux Klan placed a bounty on his life. Armed black men had to place a ring of security around his home to prevent the assassination of him and his family, but Rev. King didn't give an inch. He stuck with his lawsuit until victory came from the highest court in the country. He must be

continued on page 4

Why I Support the Voter Choice Act

By State Representative Bryan Joyce (R)

I want to list the reasons why I am the principal sponsor of HB 672, commonly referred to as the Voter Choice Act, and why you, the reader, should support this legislation as well.



1. Georgia's election code regarding ballot access is among the most restrictive in the nation. Just in the concept of justice, fairness and equality, independent and third party candidates and parties should not have to be subject to laws so prohibitive as to make ballot access almost impossible except for Democrats and Republicans.
2. Georgia's voter participation is lower than the national average, a direct result I believe in the restrictive nature of its ballot access laws.
3. Those states with the least restrictive ballot

continued on page 4

The Facts: Ballot Access Barriers and Voter Choice



By Dr. Helmut Forren.

"Ballot access barriers" are restrictive laws which specify who is allowed to run for public office. Every state has such laws. In the past, these barriers kept particular candidates off of the ballot by directly specifying the group to which they belong. Today, while such politically incorrect specificity has been eliminated, ballot access barriers still present a tangled web of requirements which continue to effectively keep particular groups off the ballot. By at least one measure, Georgia currently has the highest ballot access barriers in the nation.

continued on page 2

Executive



A Double Standard in Monopolies

by Mark Mosley

Executive Director
Libertarian Party of
Georgia

The Microsoft antitrust case perpetrated by the Antitrust division of the Dept. of Justice is a tragedy. When Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson ruled that Microsoft is a monopoly he said in his ruling that Microsoft "...could charge substantially above that which could be charged in a competitive market" and that Microsoft's customers "lack a commercially viable alternative to Windows." I am compelled to ask, where is the missing competitive market? When I shop for computers I am free to choose machines with an operating system other than Windows, notably an Apple or a Linux machine. Why are these readily available machines not commercially viable? Is it simply because Judge Jackson says so? Has Microsoft forced any of us in the rest of the world to buy its operating system? Where is the crime in any normal use of that word? The claim is made that Microsoft somehow limits my choices to what Bill Gates wants - is this the same method that the IRS uses to

limit my choices about spending my income? I think not.

Remarkably, the government lawyers are arguing that Microsoft is doing what the government does as a matter of routine, restricting the choices in our lives. Daily some government agency is making plans to restrict the choices of the rest of us. How much choice do you have over the investment of your Social Security money? Or your choice of health insurance? Most of us have a very limited range of options for the education of our children. What about the only financial cost in your life that has continually risen for your entire lifetime, the largest single item in your family budget -- your tax bill?

How is it that we private citizens have become numb to this obvious double standard? Why is it okay for government lawyers to harass private business in the name of preventing monopoly, but its acceptable for government to use its power to control your life? Or is it a resignation that your vote doesn't matter, that the politicians and their government are out of your control? It seems that even if you vote for the winning candidate, you lose. Whatever you do government gets larger and government budgets continue to expand at the expense of your family budget.

Were you aware that government even goes so far as to restrict your political choices on the ballot? Could this be part of the reason for this quiet monopoly over your

life? Did you know that third party or independent candidates are subject to different rules than the candidates in the two major political parties? These rules are called ballot access laws. Ostensibly, they are intended as a means for all potential candidates to show broad citizen support before being placed on the ballot. As a matter of reality they artificially increase the costs of a third party or independent candidacy and deny you meaningful political choices.

In the next session of the Georgia General Assembly there will be a bill called the Voter Choice Act, HB672. This bill will substantially reduce the petitioning requirements of third party and independent candidates and increase the political choices available to you on the ballot. Contact your state House representative and Senator and let them know that you want more political choices on the ballot and you want them to support the Voter Choice Act, HB672. ■

Why Libertarians Should Support the Voter Choice Act, HB672

by Mark Mosley, Executive Director
Libertarian Party of Georgia

You may have just read my Executive Message and noticed that in the end, I recommend that you support the Voter Choice Act, HB672. You may read through the remainder of this newspaper and find that it concentrates on HB672. You may also notice that we, the Libertarian Party of Georgia, have provided a place in this paper for other third parties to express their opinions and their support for HB672.

You may also have the same question that I've heard several times about HB672.

"Won't this bill let everyone on the ballot and increase the competition against ourselves?"

The freedom that we seek as Libertarians will inevitably lead to opportunity for others. This is our goal. We should embrace political competition as an opportunity for us to become stronger. If we react to our fears, then we run the danger of creating exclusionary policies like the current ballot access laws that we ourselves struggle against.

HB672 does not totally eliminate these barriers, anyway. Georgia's barriers are significantly higher than those of other states in our country. HB672 simply reduces them to a level still higher than the national average. The barriers will still be there, they just won't be as high.

Furthermore, the Libertarian Party has distinct advantages which we can leverage against competing third parties. First, we are the best organized and most strongly supported third party in the state. Second, we're the only third party now qualified at the state-wide ballot access level. Through HB672, our access will suddenly expand to local races which were previously difficult to enter due to signature requirements. This especially includes seats for U.S. House.

To date, in spite of our strength and our strong philosophical message, our candidates have consistently received only a small portion of the vote. This is due largely to two factors: 1) the myth that a Libertarian can't win, and 2) the lack of awareness that most voters have about the Libertarian Party.

The only way to overcome these factors is to run a large number of candidates for local office, thus increasing public awareness and winning some races. As long as the current ballot access barriers remain in place, this won't happen. They must be reduced in order for us to succeed locally and then state-wide (and then nationally). We need HB672.

Sure, the other third parties will try for the same level of ballot access. However, they haven't succeeded in many other states where the barriers are lower. And who knows how compromise in the legislature may effect the caps currently set in HB672. But even if they do achieve the same ballot access, it's competition that we will have to accept -- and even welcome.

All we know for sure is that we need HB672 to succeed -- and we need your help to get it passed into law. ■

The Facts: Ballot Access Barriers and Voter Choice

continued from front cover

Georgia's ballot access laws may be grouped according to three levels of access.

Level 1. - Complete access.

For complete access, a political party must receive at least 20% of the vote in the most recent Gubernatorial or Presidential race. Note that this requirement is based on the votes actually cast.

With complete access comes the ability to nominate a candidate for any partisan race in the general election as well as the ability to participate in state-sponsored primaries.

By state law, the term "political party" only applies to parties which have achieved this level of access.

Level 2. - State-wide-only access.

Political parties which have not achieved complete access are legally known as "political bodies." They may achieve state-wide-only access by acquiring petition signatures from 1% of the total registered voters within a 15 month window. Once achieved, they may maintain this level of access by nominating a candidate for state-wide office each election and receiving votes from 1% of the total registered voters. Note that both of these requirements are based on the number of registered voters, not votes cast. Since voter turnout is typically below 50%, this corresponds to at least 2% of the votes cast. Also, as the "motor-voter" program succeeds in registering more people, the disparity between registration and voter turnout continues to increase.

With state-wide-only access, a political body may nominate candidates for offices such as Governor, President, Senator, or

Public Service Commission. Only one of them must receive enough votes to maintain access. Note that this nomination access does not apply to local races such as U.S. House.

Currently, the Libertarian Party is the only political body qualified as this level.

Level 3. - Petition-only access.

All political bodies are subject to petition requirements to run in local races, including U.S. House. This is true even if they've achieved state-wide-only access.

In order to place a candidate on a local partisan ballot, signatures are required from 5% of the registered voters within a six month window. (In practice, as many as 10% are needed because many of the names are excluded for technical reasons.)

Note that Georgia has approximately four million registered voters and eleven U.S. congressional districts. Therefore, the 5% signature requirement corresponds to 200,000 signatures (400,000 effective) in order to run a full slate for U.S. House. On a percentage basis, this requirement is the highest in the nation. While Illinois comes in second with 2.4%, Georgia's requirement is ten times that of the average of all other states, which is 0.5%. Georgia's requirement is also ten times that of a similar requirement in the Ukraine, a former Soviet republic.

Voter Choice.

The Voter Choice Act, House Bill 672, aims to lower these ballot access barriers to a level that's still higher than the national average, just not ten times higher. Therefore, it does not simply open the ballot to anyone.

Level 1. - VCA Complete access.

The Voter Choice Act would have no effect on the laws for complete access.

Level 2. - VCA State-wide-only access.

The major change made in this level by the Voter Choice Act is that the word "state-wide" is changed to "any." In other words, political bodies qualifying at this level are no longer subject to the petitioning requirements for local races, including U.S. House.

The Voter Choice Act also changes the basis of achieving this level from a percentage of the number of registered voters to a percentage of votes cast. More importantly, it puts an upper cap on the number of signatures required. While both the percentage and cap have changed and will continue to change through negotiation to pass the bill, they currently stand at 2% or 7500, whichever is less.

Currently, the Libertarian Party is the only political body that will achieve ballot access to local races through the Voter Choice Act. For other bodies, the requirement for achieving this level falls from 1% of four million (40,000) to 7500.

Level 3. - VCA Petition-only access.

The Voter Choice Act likewise changes the basis at this level from a percentage of the number of registered voters to a percentage of votes cast. Again, it also puts an upper cap on the number of signatures required. While both the percentage and cap have changed and will continue to change through negotiation to pass the bill, they currently stand at 5% or 3000, whichever is less.

With eleven congressional districts, the total number of signatures required to run a full slate for U.S. House would be reduced from approximately 200,000 to 33,000. This is still 0.825%, which is 65% higher than the national average of 0.5%.

Dr. Helmut Forren is the Executive Director of the Voter Choice Coalition. ■

Libertarian



Microsoft Decision a Victory for the Little Guy

by Tom Chernetsky

Little people across the country applauded Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson as he stitched the scarlet letter "M", across the chest of Bill Gates. The trouble is that the little guy isn't always right.

Rightly, the government adjudicates issues of fraud and negligence. Microsoft is accused of neither.

You may love Microsoft or you may hate Microsoft. There is certainly ample ammunition for either side of the argument. My computer did not lock up one time while I wrote this article, so I guess I love them, today.

Sometimes, instead of building a better mousetrap, Microsoft used its size and influence in an attempt to crush its competitors. While not exactly the friendliest way to compete, it is not unique nor is it morally wrong, no matter how much you hate them.

The judge found that Microsoft could have been profitable selling its Windows upgrade for \$49, but had the gall to charge \$89. What magic prevented them from charging \$89 million dollars? The market dictates price, not some lawyer's gut feeling about what is profitable or fair.

Are you confused?

(For those of you reading along in *Atlas Shrugged*, we are now on page 455.)

Microsoft's competitors felt they could no longer compete in the Free Market. Please notice the use of the term 'Free Market' instead of 'Fair Market'.

In the Free Market, the best product does not always win. In the Free Market, the most cost-effective solution is not always chosen. In the Free Market, you cannot use the Law to destroy your competition. The idea of the 'Fair Market' should have died with the USSR.

It takes a special combination of cowardice and greed to turn the federal government loose on your own industry. Make no mistake about it, Uncle Sam is about to use the same deft skills we have seen in welfare to regulate the crowning gem of our economy, the software industry.

Are you frightened?

Bill Gates and Microsoft could never dream of doing as much damage to our economy as the federal government will do accidentally through regulation.

A man who could not even stay awake during the entire trial has declared that Bill Gates has been too successful. Hundreds of government consultants are crawling over plans to rip apart his life's work.

Are you disgusted, yet?

Why doesn't Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson take on a true monopoly, the US Postal Service? It is actually against the law to compete with the USPS for First Class Mail. It is not against the law to compete with Microsoft. It is extremely difficult, but it is not against the law.

Too often in our society, mobs of fools rush to legislate what they feel should be fair.

continued on page 6



White Rabbit Culture

by Milton Smith

Let's face it. The government has lost its so-called "War on Drugs," and many people will ask how this happened. Is it because Bill Clinton did some asinine song and dance about never inhaling? Is it because Al Gore openly admits his usage of pot? Is it because Hollywood glorifies drugs? The answer to all three is no.

Today, we have three groups of people who want to continue the war on drugs. The first group are those who see the war on drugs as a way for the government to gain more power. For example, if you deposit a large sum of cash into a bank account, it is reported to the government. Why? Because only a drug dealer would keep large sums of cash on hand. No person would sell something for outright paper money. No person would save money in a shoebox and then take it to a bank to deposit it. (With some banks charging you for deposit slips, why wouldn't you.) A person who keeps cash on hand is up to something; the government doesn't know what, but they know it's bad. This group wants the government to have control over every facet of your life, and claiming that any legislation which destroys your privacy rights are just to aid the war on drugs is an easy way to eliminate opposition.

The second group are the religious zealots, who believe that everyone's body is a temple, and that an individual should not defile it. Even if the individual does not accept the values of this group. This is the same group which wants to put mandatory prayer into the public schools. They are also the same people who oppose (sometimes violently oppose) a woman's right to choose. They want to use the government to take their values and put the force of law behind them.

The final group are the hypocrites. They have their own addictions, and they enjoy the way that they can sit back and smugly compare themselves to those who use illegal drugs. In truth, they are the ones who really want to maintain a war on drugs. So with all of these groups supporting the war on drugs, how did the government lose its war on drugs?

The answer is simple; we love drugs. American culture has become a White Rabbit culture. "One pill makes you larger, and one pill makes you small, and the ones that mother gives you don't do anything at all." If there is a pill that we can swallow to cure a problem then hand it over.

And, one does not have to look very far to see this in effect. Currently, there are scores of children taking a variety of pills to keep them from (GASP!) being kids. Ritalin is the most well known of these drugs. However most people do not know that Ritalin can have the same effect as cocaine when it is inhaled or injected. Why are so many children taking these drugs?

The answer is two-fold; first, most parents today do not want to accept the responsibility that you must take when you become a parent. Parents do not discipline their kids. This could stem from the idea that if they discipline their children then they will be seen

as abusers, or that they simply do not have the will to accept the role of the authority figure in their child's life. If the parents are viewed as an authority then they cannot be their child's friends.

The second answer is the government school system. They too have removed all forms of discipline from the classroom. So drugs like Ritalin become the only way to keep some vestige of control in the classroom. What price do we pay for this control? Look at how many of the school terrorists were on some form of mind-altering drug.

Eli Lilly ran an ad for Prozac, which showed a child-like rendering of a rain cloud on one page and a picture of the sun on the opposite page. The ad effectively said that Prozac could turn rainy days into sunny ones. I guess that someone told the ad writer that the phrase "Turn that frown upside down" had already been used. Prozac has been prescribed over 17 million times; it is the baby boomers' Valium. If you have a hard job and a hard commute (Who doesn't in this town?), then Prozac might be for you. Don't ask yourself if there are lifestyle choices that you might want to reconsider. A close evaluation of your life might lead one to the conclusion that a person has to make sacrifices in life, and that could be painful.

Finally, millions of Americans take a variety of pills so that they can lose weight. From those sold on infomercials to a variety of prescription drugs. Most of the infomercials say that you can take off the pounds by just taking their pill. American Home Products will settle a class action lawsuit for its production of the drug Phen-Fen, a drug that caused serious heart problems in some users. The cost of the settlement will almost be five billion dollars. All of this in an attempt to lose weight with a minimal amount of personal sacrifice.

So when Junior and Janie say to themselves 'What's wrong with me, and what can I do to fix the problem?' They look around and see the old man swallowing his Prozac, and Mom taking her diet pills. The kids have been taking pills at school for as long as they can remember, and as far as they're concerned the pills don't do them any good. So then, they think, 'Why shouldn't I take some X or roll a few? Maybe that will do me some good.'

American society has lost the concept of taking responsibility for one's actions. Especially when a little pill can do the job for us. If you do not discipline your child, then give him a pill that will make him controllable. If you are having a bad day, a pill can chase the blues away. Finally, if you do not want to put your fork down, or go out and sweat, then you can take a pill and the pounds will magically melt away. Why do we love drugs? Go ask Alice.

Milton Smith is running as a Libertarian for the Georgia State House Seat for District 82. He can be reached at mj95@mindspring.com



Political Parties

by Bert Lofman

With the revitalization of the Georgia Libertarian newspaper, the Libertarian Party of Georgia is on the

move. As we grow, it is perhaps useful to examine the major forces and principles at work in today's political world. A major current trend is the decrease in voter turnout. Today, less than half the eligible voters bother to cast a ballot. One can argue that Pnif voter apathy or disgust accounts for this fact. In any event, it means that there is no major party. Presidential winners are lucky to get 20 percent of the eligible voters. It also means that the law of the land may be supported by less than a quarter of the people.

To understand this trend, it may help to look at the major thrust or principles of the four main parties. The Democrats are probably the easiest to understand. They are the liberals. They believe that government works. They believe that tax and spend policies can bring about social justice and prosperity to all. In their minds, for this to work, they need to include the whole country or even the whole world. After all, we are all in the same boat. It is not right that someone in Alabama would not get the same health care as someone in New York. Liberalism requires centralized control for central planning.

Republicans are somewhat harder to understand. They are the conservatives and opposed to change. They oppose further expansion of big government taxing and spending for social programs. Their opposition to this form of government expansion gives the perception that they are opposed to centralized government planning. However, as conservatives, they are reluctant to change the status quo or eliminate government programs. They are also perfectly willing to use centralized planning to impose morality on others and to help businesses to prosper.

The new boys on the block are the Reform Party. It is hard to find a principle that holds them together. Their candidates seem to be widely separated across the political spectrum. To me, they are the party of populism, personality, and change. As long as their candidate can appeal to the non-voting public, they are a significant factor as Jessie Ventura showed.

Ross Perot ran on balancing the budget and protectionism. We now have a balanced budget and he should receive some of the credit. Jessie Ventura ran on lowering taxes and running the Minnesota government with less corruption. He also had name recognition that helped him to win the election. Buchanan is returning to the populist issue of America First through protectionism and non-intervention in European affairs.

How do libertarians fit into this milieu? If one uses the small I for libertarians, many sit on the sidelines and do not vote. Others work within the other parties to try and advance libertarian causes. It is hard to do this as a minority. If one uses the large L for the Libertarian Party, then we contend we are the party of principle but what are our principles?

continued on page 6

The Voter Choice Act, HB672, was introduced into the Georgia House in the spring of 1999 by representative Bryan Joyce (R), co-sponsored by Tyrone Brooks (D) and Lynn A. Westmoreland (R). At the same time, the Voter Choice Coalition was formed in order to lobby for this bill and to promote it to the public.

The Voter Choice Coalition is composed of representatives of the Constitution Party, Green Party, Libertarian Party, Natural Law Party, and the Reform Party. Each of these representatives hold significantly varying beliefs on what our state government should be doing. Nevertheless, they all agree on one thing: we sorely need the Voter Choice Act.

The Voter Choice Coalition is truly a joining of disparate philosophies to achieve a common goal. By working together, they each feel that the likelihood of success is tilted to their favor. After acquiring reasonable ballot access, however, one would assume that "all bets are off."

For the current battle, however, they remain united against what they see as oppressive laws impeding voter choice and therefore their own progress.

Here, we reprint the point of view of three leading members of these third parties.



Food Security Requires Democracy

by Hugh Esco

"I don't see why you all can't just run as Democrats and Republicans."

- Speaker Thomas B. Murphy, January 1999, speaking to members of the Voter Choice Coalition.

The food is poisoned.

Corporations like DuPont, Monsanto, Cargill and others involved in corporate agribusiness are making decisions behind closed board room doors, far from the folks who work the soil, that lead to the use of cancer causing chemicals on the crops and the genetic manipulation of the seed stock.

As Greens, we support a moratorium on the use of genetically modified organisms in agriculture. As our state platform puts it: "We don't need these, and the risks of putting them to use are too enormous. It is astonishingly presumptuous for profit-minded corporations and investors to imagine that in a few

short decades we can make deep, radical changes in (inter-species) boundaries without serious repercussions, and it is politically contemptuous to visit these repercussions on everyone without their universal consent."

But neither the Democrats nor the Republicans have done anything to stop this. They have in fact had bi-partisan agreement on using our tax dollars 1) to fund the research at the University of Georgia that is producing the patents being held by private for-profit corporations and 2) to buy these products and feed them to our children in the public schools.

As Greens it is a priority campaign for us to prohibit the use of genetically engineered food products or non-organic produce in our publicly funded school lunch programs. Our children deserve food that is healthy, vital and untainted. The tax dollars spent in school lunch programs would provide a powerful incentive for those who work the land to adopt good stewardship practices.

Disease prevention is the basis of a system of universal access to health care we as Green would offer to Georgians. The tobacco settlement can fund the start-up costs for such a system. Such a program would provide health care to all for less than what is currently spent providing it to a bare majority of the population, by simply getting the

continued on page 6



What is the Purpose of Our Election system?

by Vice Chair Michael Cartwright

On the second Monday of each month a group of scientist, business leaders, educators, and other people meet in an auditorium on the Georgia Tech campus to discuss the management methods of W. Edwards Deming, an American who revitalized Japanese industry in the 1950's. These people, the Atlanta Area Deming Study Group, are committed to improving society by applying Deming's principles to education, industry, and government.

Deming's central message is that every viable system must have a stated purpose in which all members agree -- without a common purpose, there is no system. The purpose of a transportation system is to move people, not to breed faster horses or build more roads. The purpose of an educational system is to teach students to read and write, not to promote phonics over whole language.

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Let's Have Ballot Access Diversity

continued from front cover

remembered as a hero.

Since 1948, in Georgia and across the South, African-American people have traditionally voted for Democrats. Those who have aligned themselves with Republicans have been dismissed as Tom's or traitors. Even though candidates such as Lester Maddox, George Wallace, Orval Faubus, Jessie Helms, David Duke, Eugene Talmadge, Marvin Griffin, Strom Thurmond, Mitch Scandalakis, Zell Miller etc., were as insulting to us as Hitler was to Jews - we still won't budge. However, this has proven to be a losing strategy for African-American political activists who are committed to justice for our people. During the past decade we've witnessed:

- A Democratic president who signed NAFTA and GATT, decimating our state's textile industry and putting thousands (of mostly black women) out of work.
- That same Democratic President refusing to take action to end the sentencing disparity which has incarcerated young black men for extensive sentences for crack cocaine possession, while white offenders receive shorter sentences or probation for possession of similar quantities of powder cocaine.
- A Democratic Governor who gave up on his campaign promise to replace our racist segregationist state flag which is the official symbol of the KKK, the Nazis, Aryan Nation, Skin Heads, etc. That same Democratic Governor sending budgets to the legislature that tripled the number of prison beds in the state, prison beds being filled disproportionately by African-Americans caught up in selective enforce-

ment, inequitable access to an adequate defense and racist patterns of sentencing disparities; (2 Strikes and Out - Law).

The truth is that I don't have faith that the Republicans have our interests any more in mind than do the Democrats. Neither will be responsive to our needs and priorities until we have somewhere else to go. And we must decide when it's time to go - not the bosses in these parties.

Democracy is not an either-or game. Democracy is about choice. And we as African-American people need a meaningful choice of political parties, including ones that are led by, represent and work for the interest of African-American people.

Black people have since after the dark days following Reconstruction, traditionally aligned ourselves with the Democratic Party. In the early days we chose this political allegiance because of racist terroristic night-riders. More recently it's been out of habit, but the Democratic Party has more often than not, taken our votes and concerns for granted. They will continue to do so until we have real choices about where to go.

Voter participation continues to fall. Voter apathy is at an all time high. This is more so in the African-American community than in the general population. Voters understand that without choices, our votes are meaningless.

That is why I am a cosponsor of HB 672 in the legislature. This legislation opens up the ballot access process to allow the formation of new political parties increasing our choices as voters. While my party's leadership fears that voters will be confused by so many choices on the ballot, I know that voters now are not confused by their lack of choices. People stay away from the polls on election day, not because they don't care, but because they have no choice on the ballot. I've been trying to get Jesse Jackson to regis-

ter Rainbow PUSH as a political party for years now. I have always run for office as a Democrat, but I am not one who will vote for a "yellow dog" just because the mutt gets my party's nomination. And African-American voters are smarter than that. The Democratic Party will serve its Black constituents to the extent that it risks losing us by not doing so. The Republican party will continue to ignore us to the extent it starts losing elections, and its traditional base of white men.

State Representative Tyrone Brooks (Democrat - 54th) has represented an Atlanta House district since 1980. He is a life-long human rights activist and is President of the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials. He cosponsored HB 672 last year.

Why I Support the Voter Choice Act

continued from front cover

access laws have not experienced "ballot crowding" which the opponents to HB 672 say is the main reason for their opposition.

4. The federal Motor Voter Act has done a good job of increasing voter registration, but has failed to increase informed voter participation in elections. In fact, Motor Voter has unintentionally reduced voter participation by making it even more difficult for third party and independent candidates to gain access to the ballot. Thus, those candidate's supporters have even less reason to go to the polls. The Voter Choice Act remedies this unintentional aspect of Motor Voter by basing the petition count on the number of those

actually voting, not the number of registered voters.

5. The traditional parties, Democrat and Republican, have a monopoly on the political process. This results in the same problems in the political process that monopolies cause in other spheres such as business and education; an unwillingness to self-criticize and tendency to gain power for the sake of perpetuating the monopoly, principles and constituency be damned; are two examples that come to mind.

6. Third party and independent candidacies will force the traditional parties to be more true to their core beliefs and constituencies, thus invigorating their base and increasing voter participation. The traditional parties will be under pressure to more sharply define themselves. I see this as a positive aspect for the traditional parties.

7. The populace is very cynical of the political process and distrusts the current political climate represented by the traditional two party system.

8. Third party and independent candidacies have historically and will continue to bring more vigorous debate of issues and ideas that traditional parties are becoming unwilling to discuss. This will increase intelligent, informed voter participation in the formation of public policy, thus promoting true diversity.

9. Last, but certainly not least, our Republic rises or falls on the intelligent and informed participation of citizens in the voting process. The Voter Choice Act will increase informed, intelligent voter participation and is, in my opinion, crucial to restoring credibility and trust in our government.

State Representative Bryan Joyce (Republican - 1st) introduced and sponsored HB 672 last year.

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So, what is the purpose of elections? The purpose is for us to freely choose our representatives for local, state, and national offices, not to keep Democrats and Republicans in power. Let's apply the Deming test to Georgia's election system; what was the purpose of last month's elections? Were we free to vote for the person of our choice? No, we were free to vote for the Democrat or Republican of our choice. In reality elections are controlled by people who are already elected, not by voters.

As long as we are not allowed to freely choose our representatives, the election process in Georgia will not work. According to Secretary of State Cathy Cox, "Georgia typically ranks 48th in the nation in voter participation." Is it a coincidence that Georgia also ranks 48th in the nation in education? Our state faces many serious problems, and we can no longer solve them with petty political solutions. It's about time we realized the actual purpose of the Democratic/Republican political system that is running our government; it is to maintain political control of elected offices, not to improve our society.

Ask yourself this question: How would you design an election system from scratch? Would you form two political parties, put *continued on page 6*



It's Time to Vote "For" Rather Than "Against"

by Treasurer
Michael Novosel

As one of the officers of the Reform Party of Georgia, I can tell you that from my travels and conversations with people across the state, people are looking for more variety in the candidates for public office. They are crying out for an opportunity to vote 'for' rather than 'against' someone.

For years, groups like ours have been trying to have a voice in the way our government operates, and to nominate, run and elect citizens that are more in line with our views on government. The major constraint to our effectiveness has been the current 'ballot access laws'.

The current laws are constructed to limit voter choice, rather than enhance it. I find it interesting that politicians continually sell us on the advantages of a 'free market' and how

'healthy competition' is good for us all. That through competition our options are expanded and we are better served. Then you ask "What about in politics?", and then the conversation ends.

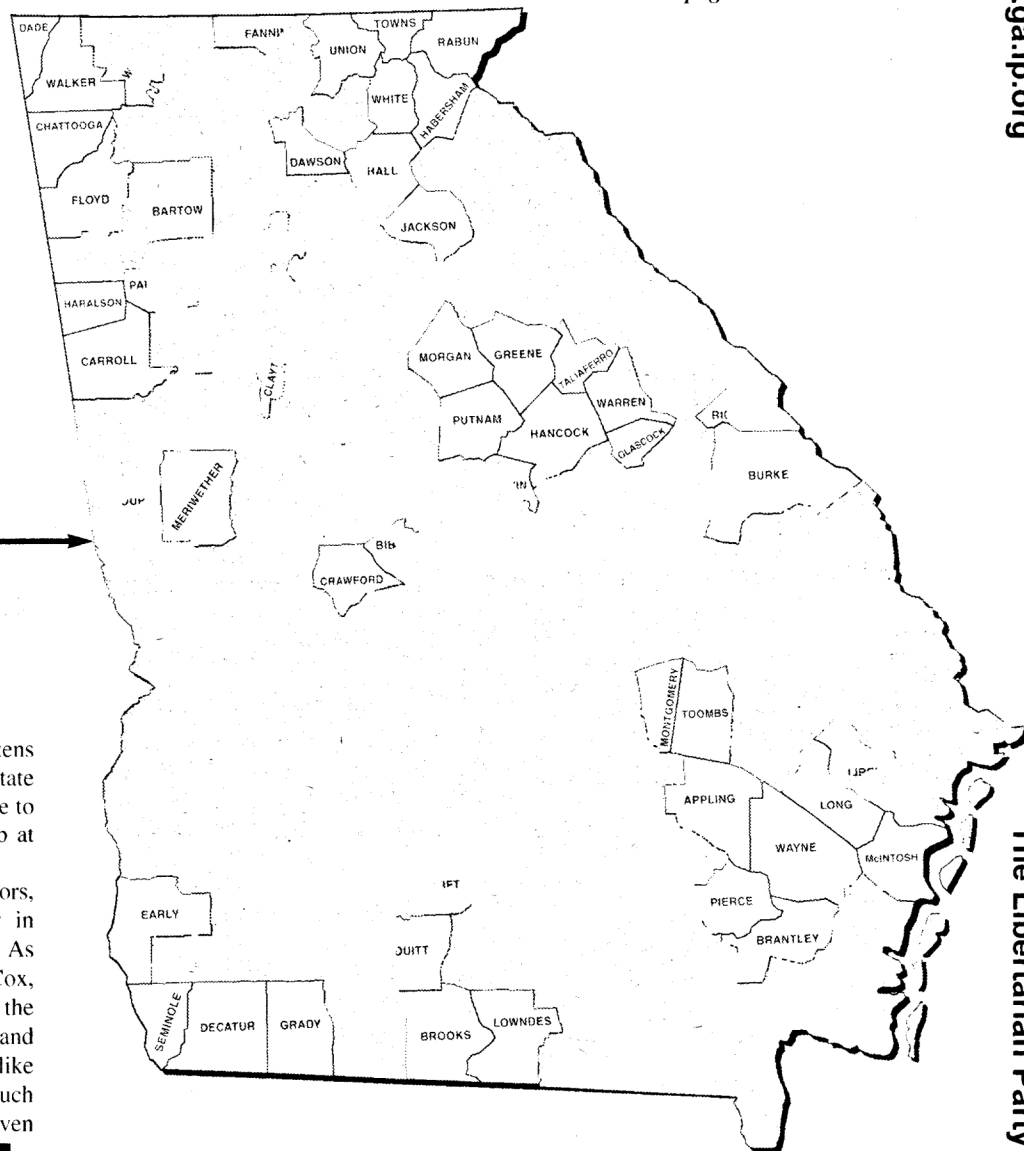
In our current political arena competition is limited or non-existent. Many elected officials ran unopposed in 1998. My experience tells me that there are many people wishing to be involved if they only had the chance yet few did. Was it because they chose not to, or the laws prevented them? We can answer the first question by addressing

the second one.

The Voter Choice Act will open the door for all interested citizens in Georgia. By modifying our onerous petitioning and ballot access laws, we will be able to develop more political parties and involve more citizens as both voters and candidates in the process. The public debate will be enriched, new and varying solutions to the problems facing Georgia will be voiced, and people will now be able to find political groups more closely aligned with their personal views.

We need to start the ball rolling on this

continued on page 6



Last November, 180 state representatives and 56 state senators were elected to the Georgia General Assembly. These fine men and women took on the burden of representing their constituency, working long hours at the capitol each winter, and receiving only modest compensation for their efforts.

The problem is that 136 of them were unopposed on the ballot. In any particular case, this wasn't necessarily their own fault. However, this situation left 4 million out of 5.5 million voting age Georgians with no choice. Instead of having two or more names to choose from – a fundamental premise upon which our representative democracy

was founded – these unfortunate citizens were presented with a ballot for either state house or senate that had but a single name to choose from. The red areas on the map at right show where these 4 million live.

As a result of this and other factors, recurring year after year, voter apathy in Georgia is nearly the worst in the nation. As reported by Secretary of State Cathy Cox, Georgia typically ranks as bad as 48th in the nation in voter turnout – for Presidential and Gubernatorial races, that is. For races like the state house, however, turnout is much lower. Barely 20% of voting age adults even bothered to vote in these races last year. ■

January 10, 2000
9:30 - 10:30 am
State Capitol Bldg, Atlanta

The 2000 session of the Georgia General Assembly starts on Monday, January 10th. We'll be there on the front steps of the state Capitol building, where they can't miss us.

We need for you to be there, too. Without a show of public support, the legislators will think we're just a few troublemakers. They'll ignore us and the Voter Choice Act will not be passed. After all, they are not so interested in opening up competi-

tion against themselves on the ballot.

However, if enough of you show up early that Monday morning, they'll have no choice but to pay attention to us.

So go ahead and schedule your next dentist appointment for 11:30 am and then tell your boss you won't be in until after lunch. Of course, be sure to come to the rally on your way to the dentist! And if you can't get a dentist appointment at that time, then just pretend. Take a sick day. Whatever. We need you there.

Oh yes, and we're planning to have some special guests there, too. You won't want to miss that, either.

Your state legislators need to hear from you. It's easy. Here's a step-by-step method you can follow to help convince your legislators to vote for the Voter Choice Act, HB672.

Visit www.voterchoice.org and sign the petition. This will send email directly to your state legislators. Be sure to provide all 9 digits of your zip code. See www.usps.com/nesc/lookups/lookup_zip+4.html if necessary. After signing, write down the provided names, phone numbers, and addresses for your state representative and senator. This same information is available at any time at www.voterchoice.org/lookup.php3.

Call both your state representative and senator. If you can't get their contact info from www.voterchoice.org then call

your **county** elections office and ask for your state house & senate district numbers plus legislators' phone numbers and addresses.

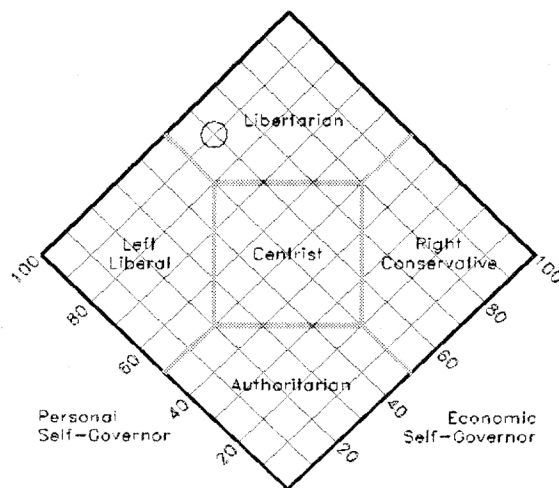
Barrow: 770-307-3110. **Bartow:** 770-387-5098. **Butts:** 770-775-8202. **Carroll:** 770-830-5824. **Cherokee:** 770-479-0407. **Clayton:** 770-477-3372. **Cobb:** 770-528-2300 ext 0, ask for registrar. **DeKalb:** 404-298-4020. **Douglas:** 770-920-7217. **Fulton:** 404-730-7072. **Forsyth:** 770-781-2118. **Gwinnett:** 770-822-8787. **Hall:** 770-531-6945. **Haralson:** 770-646-2010. **Henry:** 770-954-2021. **Jackson:** 706-367-6360. **Lamar:** 770-358-5235. **Tu-Fr. Newton:** 770-784-2055. **Paulding:** 770-443-7503. **Polk:** 770-749-2103. **Rockdale:** 770-785-5947. **Spalding:** 770-467-4245. **Walton:** 770-267-1337.

Next, write a letter and mail it to each of your state legislators.

Finally, contact as many friends as you can, via email or telephone, and ask them to do the same thing.

World's Smallest Political

Take the
World's Smallest
Political Quiz
and find out
how you place
on the
political grid!



Examine the following 10 statements.
Respond with Y if you agree, M for maybe or sometimes, and N if you disagree.

Personal Issues

	Y	M	N
Military service should be voluntary (no draft).	Y	M	N
Government should not control radio, TV, the press, or the Internet.	Y	M	N
Repeal regulations on sex for consenting adults.	Y	M	N
Drug laws do more harm than good. Repeal them.	Y	M	N
Let peaceful people cross borders freely.	Y	M	N

Economic Issues

	Y	M	N
Businesses and farms should operate without government subsidies.	Y	M	N
People are better off with free trade than with tariffs.	Y	M	N
Minimum wage laws cause unemployment. Repeal them.	Y	M	N
End taxes. Pay for services with user fees.	Y	M	N

Scoring:

For the personal issues, figure 20 points for each "Y" answer, 10 points for each "M", and 0 points for each "N".

Figure a separate score for the economic issues (20 for each "Y", 10 for each "M" and 0 for each "N").

Using your two scores as indications of your level of self-government in personal and economic issues, find your location in the political grid above.

For example, if you scored 90 on personal and 60 on economic, your location would be on the left side of libertarian, as indicated by the example circle.

It's Time to Vote "For" Rather Than "Against"

continued from column page 4

in time for the 2000 elections. The first step is calling your representatives and telling them that you would like to see them pass the Voter Choice Act. That you wish to have a broader selection of candidates and ideas to address the issues facing our state and communities. You can also schedule to attend the rally at the Capitol on January 10, 2000 to show our elected public servants that we are serious and involved.

After all, my TV has more than 2 channels, my radio has more than 2 radio stations, and my grocery store carries more than 2 flavors of Coca Cola. I would like the same range of selection on my ballots.

Michael Novosel is the Treasurer of the Reform Party of Georgia. He can be reached at 770-565-4093. ■

Political Parties

continued from column page 3

If we look at a major similarity of the Republicans and Democrats, it is the use of the centralized federal government for central planning. With this in mind, are libertarians against all central planning or do we have exceptions? Freedom of speech is perhaps an interesting example. For instance, what if a state such as Georgia made a law against the use of any profanity in newspapers, even if it was quoting someone? Does the US Constitution with its Bill of Rights protect all speech?

Many if not most libertarians would answer, "Yes, of course." However, is this not just another form of central planning? If we are to fight the central planners, then we must be consistent. Perhaps this is why the First Amendment of the US Bill of Rights begins, "Congress shall make no law, abridging the freedom of speech, or press." It seems clear that our founding fathers understood the need to control the urge to centrally plan, even for such a worthy cause as free speech. This is why they intended the Bill of Rights to contain only the federal government and not the states.

Bert Loftman, Atlanta, GA may be reached at b.loftman@gte.net. He is the 5th District Director of Americans for Fair Taxation www.fairtax.org, a columnist for www.georgiapolitics.com, and a board member of Physicians Who Care www.pwc.org.

"One fears most the ignorance of the people; the other, the selfishness of the rulers" --Thomas Jefferson ■

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www.self-gov.org, 1-800-932-1776, or 770-386-8372. OK to reprint Quiz as-is with credit to the Advocates. The Self-Government Compass is adapted from an original idea by David Nolan.

What is the Purpose of our Election System?

continued from column page 4

their leaders in power, and then let them make all the rules? Of course not, only an insane person would do such a thing. The first thing you would do is take politics out of elections. The simplest solution is to have elections non-partisan; eliminate primaries and have no party labels on the ballot in the general election. Party affiliations, or lack of, could be declared after the elections. Another solution is equal treatment for all political parties. In other words, any political party can have their candidates name on the ballot; this was accomplished in Florida recently by a constitutional amendment.

Now the Democrats/Republican Party will give you arguments all day long as to why these solutions will not work, but they don't understand that the purpose of elections is to let us freely choose our local, state, and national representatives; it is not to have a convoluted system requiring some candidates to collect thousands of signatures on a petition, while others only have to pay a small fee to have their names on the ballot.

Michael Cartwright is Vice Chair of the Libertarian Party of Georgia, and is a public school teacher. ■

Microsoft Decision a Victory for the Little Guy

continued from column page 3

The little people in San Francisco have just passed a law that limits the amount of money that banks can charge for using an ATM. Did you know that there is no limit on the amount stores can charge for baby food? For milk? For gasoline? I am sure the little people in San Francisco will get right on these burning issues.

The judge's decision is a victory for everyone who believes that success comes only to those who cheat. It is victory for all of the people who know deep in their hearts that Bill Gates just can't be worth one hundred billion dollars.

Are you one of the little people, or are you bigger than that?

Tom Chernetsky is running as a Libertarian for the Georgia State House Seat for District 85. He can be reached at tchernetsky@mindspring.com ■

Food Security Requires Democracy

continued from column page 4

insurance corporations out from between a patient and their choice of health care provider. Access to health care is a right, not a privilege of the rich. The failure of the existing parties to address this issue in a meaningful way is indicative of how they work for the corporations and not the people.

But neither the Democrats nor the Republicans are at all interested in taking on the corporate welfare programs that make possible the corporate policy making that adversely affects the public good. And anyone who attempts to raise these issues within their parties will quickly be brought in line.

Public elections for public office are a public function and should not be the domain of private clubs. Voters have a constitutional right to freedom of association, to self-organize in ways they see will best express their collective political perspectives. We have a right to call ourselves Green or whatever party title we want without incurring the \$100,000.00 cost of ballot access faced by everyone but the Democrats and Republicans.

As Greens we share a political perspective that we ought to be governed democratically by people, not corporations; that our food should be healthy, vital and untainted, not poisonous; that our nation ought to pursue non-violent means in the conduct of foreign policy, not wage wars against the civilians of Iraq and Kosovo; that we ought to use the criminal

justice system to create public safety, not as a tool to criminalize young black men and create a slave labor force of inmate labor working for private corporations and undermining our wages and working conditions.

As Greens we are willing to risk a democracy that will give our opponents, not just us, a voice in public policy making. We are not satisfied that either the Republicans or the Democrats speak to our interests. We are not satisfied that our elections are democratic. We are not satisfied with the direction of public policy or with the corporate oligarchy our future promises. We are not satisfied by staying this course to mass extinction.

So we organize as an independent political party. And we insist on our place on the ballot, in the debates and in candidate forums. We insist that the election rules be democratized so that everyone may be represented in deliberative bodies - not just the members of the private clubs who now govern us.

Hugh Esco is the chair of the Voter Choice Coalition, the clerk of the Georgia Green Party and was the 1998 Green Party nominee for Lieutenant Governor of Georgia. To learn more about the Green Party, call 770/635-3496 or link to: <http://www.greens.org/georgia/>. ■

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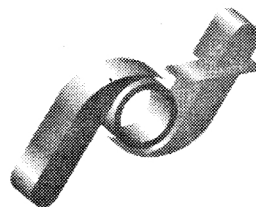
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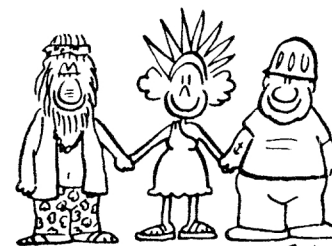
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Join the Libertarian Party

Here are just a few of the reasons
YOU should join the Libertarian Party TODAY!

I'm not a political person. Why join?

You're probably *non-political* because you believe that government should be a small part of your life, the life of a responsible, law-abiding citizen.

Is your tax bill a small part of your life?

You've been so busy raising your family, working your job, and creating your life, that you've neglected to make yourself known. Clearly, your values of self-responsibility are not reflected in your government.

To join the Libertarian Party is to take a stand — a stand that you want a government limited to protecting your freedom, not one that's expanding its own budget at the expense of your family budget.

It's time to make yourself known. It's time to make your voice heard. It's time to stand up for your freedom. It's time to join the Libertarian Party.

Please join us!

Why does my membership matter?

You're probably *non-political* because you prefer to interact with others on the basis of mutual respect and tolerance.

But freedom is not free.

Nor is it guaranteed — Freedom lives in

your actions and everyone must do their part.

What is your unique role?

What actions can you take to create a new trend of expanding family budgets and shrinking government budgets? If you were part of a team, would that help your actions be more effective?

Join the Libertarian Party and join a team working for what you deserve, a political system that respects you as a unique individual — as someone who can make their own plans and take responsibility for themselves, who can be compassionate to others, and who can and will solve their own problems.

Is it a wasted vote?

You're probably *non-political* because you sense futility in the political system. Whether you vote Democrat or Republican, government continues to get bigger and more intrusive.

Are you getting what you want?

If status quo politicians believe they have your vote locked up they have no incentive to change.

Give them that incentive.

Vote Libertarian.

Don't waste your vote in a futile effort that gets you more of what you don't want — make your stand loud and clear. Enough is Enough!

Vote for what you really want!

Vote Libertarian.

Yes! Sign me up now!

- ✦ Individual State membership, \$35 per year
- ✦ Student (under 25) membership, \$15 per year
- ✦ Combined State and National, \$50 per year

"I do not believe in or advocate the initiation of force as a means of achieving political or social goals."

Signature (for Nat'l membership)

And accept my pledge of

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- ✦ \$25 per month
- ✦ \$35 per month
- ✦ \$50 per month
- ✦ ____ per month
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We're much more than that, however. We're printing tens of thousands of copies and then distributing by insertion into commercial newspapers, including Creative Loafing. This will insure that our message is spread throughout metropolitan Atlanta and soon throughout the state. It's high time that the rest of the population discover the excellent political alternative that the Libertarian Party provides.

So that the readers of these commercial papers realize that our editorial content is *not* that of the paper into which we're inserted, our pages read "Paid Advertisement" on the top. Well, it's a small compromise to make for the very effective distribution network it affords us!

Also, since the vast majority of our distribution is actually to people who are *not* already members, our focus will frequently be directed to them. Please bear with us as we try to spread the Libertarian message. The advantage of this focus, of course, is that you'll see our efforts first hand. ■

Get Ready for the Best State Convention Yet

The Libertarian Party of Georgia's 2000 convention is coming up in March. Look forward to the best convention yet. We've already confirmed **HARRY BROWNE**. This is your prime chance to see and hear our 1998 Presidential candidate and lead runner for the 2000 candidacy.

We've also confirmed motivational speaker **MICHAEL CLOUD**. If you haven't heard Michael speak before, you're really in for a treat you'll never forget. After hearing just one speech of Michael's, people have been rumored to go out afterward and convert legions to Libertarianism, cure world hunger, and even walk on water.

But there's more! The state convention in March is where delegates to the national convention in July are chosen. With sufficient enthusiasm, anyone can become a delegate. (It's OK if it's your first time doing anything and you haven't yet grasped the spelling of "Libertarian".) And if you think the speakers are great at the state convention, wait until you hear the ones at the national convention. Your life will never be the same again. And you get to nominate the Presidential candidate!

Oh yes, and there's important business going on at both the state and national convention, too. Vote on bylaws. Vote on the platform. And best of all, vote on party officers and our slate of candidates for 2000.

Look for more info next month.. ■