

For additional information: Bill Winter, Director of Communications ♦ (202) 333-0008 Ext. 226

Libertarian Party celebrates 25th birthday as America's most influential third party

WASHINGTON, DC — The Libertarian Party celebrated its 25th anniversary on December 11th — marking a quarter century as America's most successful and influential third party.

"We're established as the most important third party of the latter half of the 20th century," said Steve Dasbach, the party's national chairman. "Now we're working to become the dominant *major* party of the first half of the 21st century."

In passing the quarter-century mark, the Libertarian Party becomes one of only eight parties in American history to remain politically active for 25 years.

During those years, the party has run thousands of candidates for public office, elected hundreds of officeholders, racked up tens of millions of votes, and grown to include 125,000 registered voters in 28 states — "remarkable accomplishments, given the humble nature of the party's beginning," noted Dasbach.

It was on December 11, 1971, when eight individuals met in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and formally voted to form the Libertarian Party.

The impetus? The imposition of wage and price controls by President Richard Nixon, recalled David Nolan, one of the founding members, which made the group decide that "a new political party, dedicated to the uncompromising defense of individual liberty, was needed now!"

Since then, the Libertarian Party has helped to fundamentally shift the nature of American political debate. "Ideas considered outlandish 20 years ago — privatizing government services, ending the War on Drugs, and so on — are part of mainstream politics now," said Dasbach. "Libertarianism has become one of the most powerful intellectual forces in America." In fact, libertarianism has been called "the real inspiration behind the Republican revolution" (*New York* magazine, 1995), and "the cutting-edge politics of the time" (*The Village Voice*, 1996).

During its 25 years, the Libertarian Party has watched Republicans and Democrats scramble to remain relevant while support for the two-party system has plummeted and distrust of government has soared.

"For 25 years, Republicans and Democrats have been hoping that we'll just go away," said Dasbach. "But every time they suggest a new tax, or impose more censorship, or get America involved in another bloody war, or subsidize their corporate clients, we'll be there to point out their sins. We've spent 25 years keeping Republican and Democratic politicians honest. We plan to spend the next 25 years keeping them unemployed."

#