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Boom in Libertarian voter registration leaves Republicans & Democrats in dust

WASHINGTON, DC —The number of registered Libertarian voters is increasing eight times faster than the number of Democrats and five times faster than Republicans, according to newly released figures.

In the 28 states that allow partisan registration, the number of Libertarians grew by 49% in the past two years, according to the latest issue of *Ballot Access News*, a San Francisco-based publication that tracks election and registration data.

“This is the most rapid, sustained growth in registered voters in our history,” said the party’s national director, Perry Willis. “We’re still small compared to the Republicans and Democrats, but these numbers show we’re catching up fast.”

The Libertarian growth rate easily outpaced that of the Democratic Party (which grew by an anemic 6.3%), and the Republican Party (up just 9.9%). The number of registered Libertarians now stands at 162,545, up from 109,000 in 1994.

“As the older parties are dragged down by failure and scandal, voters are looking for something new,” said Willis. “And, increasingly, they are finding it in the Libertarian Party.”

In fact, he said, the growth in Libertarian registration is just one “data point” of the party’s growing success.

■ “The boom in registered voters parallels our growth in contributing members, presidential vote totals, and Libertarians elected to public office,” he noted. “In every category, we’ve experienced a 50% to 100% increase since 1992.”

■ A nationwide Gallup poll taken last year revealed that about 50 million Americans, or 20% of the population, broadly define themselves as Libertarian, meaning they favor a dramatically smaller, less intrusive government.

■ Libertarian vote totals are increasing: Libertarian candidates for state and federal races received a total of 5.4 million votes in 1996.

■ Libertarian ideas are becoming more popular. “Ideas that were considered fantasy 20 years ago — like abolishing the income tax, privatizing Social Security, and eliminating welfare — are dominating public policy. In many ways, Libertarians are actually driving the nation’s political debate,” said Willis.

“If these trends continue, Libertarians will clearly have a significant impact on American politics as we head into the 21st century,” he said.

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