

**Who to Support – Ron Paul or the LP?
My Personal Recommendations
By Guy McLendon, Harris County LP Chair**

Many Libertarian Party members want to support Ron Paul, and do not want to abandon the LP. Texas Election Code, or Texas law, imposes a choice. Voters are prohibited from participating in both a Republican primary, and in our Libertarian Party convention process. When one votes in a primary party's election, that act affiliates the voter with that primary party for the balance of that calendar year. Participation in LP's convention process also requires affiliation. It would appear the decision on who to support is an "either-or" choice, but it's not.

To comply with Texas law, certain roles within the LP require official party affiliation, but many do not. The following roles require legal LP affiliation: candidates, precinct chairs, members of the county or state executive committees, and convention delegates. If you are *at all* considering to participate in the LP in any one of those roles, then I strongly encourage you to remain officially affiliated with the LP. If LP leaders depart merely to cast one vote in the Republican primary, such gutting of our leadership would severely damage the LP at local, state & national levels.

If you, a Ron Paul supporter, wish to assist Dr. Paul in his campaign to be President, your best impact may be to run as a proactive LP candidate. Let me explain. Being a candidate gives you the opportunity to participate in candidate forums. As a LP candidate in a candidate forum, you could give your personal endorsement for Ron before a crowd of 100 proactive voters. Then, do it again, and again. Weight that benefit as compared to you walking into the Republican polling location, and casting one vote.

If a Ron Paul supporter runs for federal office on the LP ticket, your campaign is allowed a HUGE amount of flexibility in how to present your campaign message to the voting public. As an individual, Federal Election Code restricts your 1st amendment right to free speech, but being our candidate could free you up a bit. The state of Texas has 32 slots for US Representative. You, a constitutionalist, could run on the LP ticket with the same basic message as Dr. Paul's campaign.

A Ron Paul supporter will often decide to vote in the Republican primary. However, Harris County LP Bylaws do not preclude non-affiliates from working within our organization in a leadership role. HCLP welcomes libertarians regardless of party affiliation. Non-affiliates are welcome to work on HCLP's Leadership Team.

Of course, if your spouse or friend is *not* going to be a LP candidate, serve as an officer, or have input as a delegate, then I recommend he/she vote in the Republican primary to support Ron Paul. Having affiliates who are relatively non-active does not, by itself, bring a lot of value to the LP's daily operation.

Ron Paul's supporters, similar to LP members, are in a surrealistic situation. His supporters realize the GOP leadership opposes that which constitutionalists hold most dear – peaceful existence based upon the Rule of Law. Win or lose, we hope that Ron Paul supporters will remember those who stood by them to fight for the cause of Liberty. For myself, I support the LP, and personally endorse Ron Paul's campaign for President of the United States.