



Gulf Coast Liberty

Defending liberty in southeast Texas in the Spirit of San Jacinto

September 2003

Chronicle Prints Libertarians' Op-Eds

In less than the span of a week this August two opinion articles written by Libertarian activists were printed in the Houston Chronicle.

Jeff Daiell's article (reprinted below) on ballot access and the California recall election was published Friday, August 15. Then the Chronicle printed an article critical of light rail from David Hutzelman on Wednesday, August 20.

Jeff is the Vice Chair for HCLP and a former Governor candi-

date. David is a former state chair and candidate who is leading the Business Committee Against Rail (BusCAR).

By forming BusCAR, a political action committee, David has been able to draw support from outside the Party. As the only consistent opposition to the boondoggle of rail in Houston David has become the media's go-to-person for a response to Metro's propaganda. The Houston Business Review in June printed opinion by David and he's been quoted in a number of

other local news sources.

Jeff has been actively participating in the Houston Chronicle's Sounding Board for volunteer commentators. While having his comments published in the paper is infrequent, Jeff has been successful in getting his commentary published in the Chronicle's online edition several times.

Jeff says the Sounding Board could use more Libertarians. To volunteer email sounding@chron.com.

In Defense of California's Process

by Jeff Daiell

Many observers are mocking California's recall election, smearing it as a circus; some are even (in a truly Orwellian twist) calling it "undemocratic". Let's look at those charges.

Your service organization, or fraternal society, or labor union, has 600,000 members. When the election for the group's presidency comes around, three candidates vie for the position. Would you call that a "circus"? Yet those three contenders are a larger percentage of the group's membership than the 135 candidates in the recall election are of California's population. In fact, it would take 170 entries in the California balloting to match the percentage those three represent.

We've simply grown accustomed, due to harsh and likely unConstitutional election laws, and news media loathe to cover more than two candidates per contest, to candidate fields, and a range of viewpoints advanced during a campaign, far smaller than the Founders countenanced. Even for the highest office in

the land, the Presidency, the Framers saw nothing wrong with large numbers of candidates. Indeed, the Constitution originally had the House of Representatives, should the Electoral College fail to elect a president, pick from among the top **five** electoral college vote getters, implying they anticipated more than five received electoral votes. Now, under the 12th Amendment, passed after the experience of several presidential elections, the House still picks from the top three. No, the Framers had no quarrel with big candidate fields.

It's true that the list of candidates include some who do not take the process seriously. But that can happen even with the most Draconian filing restrictions. In fact, some of the stunts pulled by "serious" candidates can leave voters shaking their heads (remember Mike Dukakis and the tank? Bush #1 and the pork rinds?).

And, along with the light-hearted candidates are those with serious alternatives to the sound-bite cliches which voters have grown weary

of — and which have proven ineffective in case after case. Those alternatives may or may not be better than the recycled platitudes of the professional politicians, but they deserve a hearing; more importantly, the voters deserve a chance to weigh them against what they are accustomed to hearing.

As for the second charge, that the recall is "undemocratic"? That ignores the fact that this issue will be decided democratically; that part of the process, at least, will be determined by majority vote. Also, the contention that it is "undemocratic" to remove any politician once elected would, carried to its logical conclusion, require that terms be for life, and that the impeachment power be taken away from legislative bodies.

The fact is, things happen - or are discovered - after elections which can justify imposing a legal/political penalty, such as recall or impeachment, on an elected official. The unfortunate thing is not that California voters have the recall option, but that voters in many States do not.



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In the Mail

In reply to Kris Overstreet's suggestion in last month's Lone Star Liberty to vote for proposed Constitutional Amendment number 7:

I understand that there are two valuations at odds here: the defendant's right to a fair trial, and the juror's right not to be coerced into involuntary servitude. Both are libertarian ends.

However, how does reducing the number of jurors (while maintaining involuntary servitude of other jurors), while simultaneously reducing a defendant's right to fair trial, create a situation that is substantially better (moved toward liberty) than before?

Or, does the release of six juror members outweigh the fair trial violations that may occur as a result of the reduced panel? Given the nature of jury-selection (and removal), wouldn't reducing the number of jurors make it easier for the prosecution to hand-select a homogenous (read: statist) panel? Also, given that the United States places a substantial check against government power in the judicial system, I would like the proponents of this amendment to address the issue of jury service as a civic duty within that society.

Monica Granger

I've just finished sending the following e-mail to Ron Paul, Tom DeLay, Kay Baily Hutchinson & John Cornyn on the subject of pharmaceutical/drug legislation

I'm a libertarian and while my comments will not represent an ideal free market approach, within the reality of beltway politics, it may represent an acceptable compromise position. The alternatives certainly seem much worse.

Within the Senate, has there been any discussion of the divestiture of the drug research industry from the drug manufacturing industry?

One of the arguments I hear most frequently involves the low cost

of American drugs sold in Canada as compared to American pricing. If the commercial end of the industry was separate from the research end, then this would tend to equalize worldwide pricing and force foreign, socialized systems to bear part of the research costs now born almost exclusively by Americans.

George Harper

We have a golden opportunity to get people in Texas to vote Libertarian next time around.

As you know, the Republicans dropped the ball when it came to property tax relief. They even refused to cap the increase on property taxes. They proved what phonies they are.

All Libertarian candidates should throw this back into their face and convince the voters that Libertarians are committed to true tax reform and downsizing our governments by eliminating all socialistic programs.

Bob Schwartz

Financing local government costs through IRS deductible donations is a brilliant idea! Flog that one a little harder!

Jeremy Davis

An American citizen, (*Jose Padilla--see www.chargepadilla.org or www.cato.org/dailys/08-21-03*) arrested on American soil as an "enemy combatant" (based on questionable circumstantial evidence), charged with no crime, imprisoned indefinitely in a military facility with no access to an attorney or any other outside party.

This is a very dangerous precedent that's being set... and a Constitutional loophole that the Feds can drive a truck through.

Ted Biggs

Interested in networking with Hispanic Libertarians? You can find them at Hispaniclibertarians-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Renew your newsletter subscription today!

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Occupation_____

Tired of missing all the really cool activist opportunities? Send us your email and we'll let you in on all the details: _____

Tax Cap PAC

With more than 12,000 members and the heavy involvement of KSEV radio—there is a new PAC in town that is promising to fight for the cap on property taxes (House Bill 3223) that failed to pass the Texas Senate this session. The group called Citizens Lowering Our Unfair Taxes (C.L.O.U.T.) was founded by Dan Patrick at KSEV. Paul Bettencourt, Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector, is also a key figure in the group.

"As of today no elected official will speak against C.L.O.U.T. or the 5% cap on appraisals. Using the size and influence of C.L.O.U.T. and the ever growing funds in the PAC we intend to present a statewide unbeatable campaign to drive this 5% cap right through the legislature and into State Law," wrote C.L.O.U.T. Executive Director Edd Hendee in their August newsletter.

Their mission as reported on their website (www.clouttexas.com) is to "reduce spending and reduce the tax burden on homeowners." They also call for elected officials to "make every effort to reduce spending in all areas."

"I do not think elected officials have faced such a formidable and aroused set of critics. This could get real interesting." said Barry Klein of the Houston Property Rights Association about C.L.O.U.T.

The group can be reached at www.clouttexas.com or P.O. Box 19030-151 Houston Texas 77224.

Dan Weiner Faces Cancer

Dan Weiner, longtime HCLP activist and founder of the Houston Pink Pistol's chapter was diagnosed with cancer in July.

Dan went to the hospital July 16 suffering from pneumonia where a CAT scan found tumors on his lung and liver as well as the pneumonia. A subsequent hospital visit confirmed inoperable lung cancer that has spread to his liver, brain and possibly kidneys.

Dan is currently at home with his housemates Harlan and Marti Bennett. He has been experiencing seizures, but at press time was not having problems with pain.

Harlan has said that visitors are welcome. Also, cards and notes can be sent to Dan at 7826 Marinette, Houston, TX 77074. She said that Dan's care is covered by the Veteran's Hospital and that monetary donations should be directed to a Libertarian organization or fund in Dan's name.

Dan is also a member of the Free State Project and the Ad Hoc Conspiracy to Draft L. Neil Smith. He had recently been brought on as the new editor of The Libertarian Enterprise.

Club Meetings Change

The Clear Lake Libertarian Caucus Supper Club needs a host. Paul Morris is no longer able to organize the event. Also, there will be no Second Saturday Lunch in September as the hostess is on vacation. Lunches resume in October.

Activist Report

Jeff Daiell spoke to more of Professor McLane's Government classes at Wharton Junior College on June 30. He gave out copies of the Constitution and book marks.

Jeff's article *The Top Ten Ways the U.S. Government Can Reduce the Chances of Terrorist Attacks Against the United States and Their Citizens* was published on the front page of Libertyforall.net and Rational Review's website put up a link to the piece.

Marie Angell, and Will and Eric Blumentritt have formed the Snakecharmers. Not only is the band great, they also include a number of liberty themed songs in their repertoire. Marie reports that they will seriously consider playing LP events!

Thanks Donors!

The Harris County Libertarian Party would like to thank the following recent donors:

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Free 2nd Amendment Conference —see calendar!

Libertarian Activities September 2003

Sept. 7 (Sun.) Harris County Meeting at 9614 Oregano Circle (off Corporate Drive.) For starting time or information contact John at 713-271-1776.

Sept. 9 (Tues.) 7 p.m. Brazoria County Meeting at Golden Corral, Hwy 388 Business, Angleton. Contact George Harper at Gharper@sat.net or 979-964-3693.

Sept. 13 (Sat.) Elections. Amendments to the Texas Constitution will be on the ballot.

Sept. 16 (Tues.) 6:30 p.m. Jefferson County Meeting at the LogonC@fe, 3805 Calder Ave., in Beaumont. Contact John Gossage at che_prof@hotmail.com or 409-860-4499.

Sept. 17-Sept. 23 Constitution Week. Outreach with free copies of the Constitution planned for Fall Kid's Festival on the 20th and 21st at the Kemah boardwalk. Contact Guy McLendon at guy@mclendon.net to volunteer or for information.

Sept. 18 (Thur.) 7 p.m. San Jacinto Supper Club at Top China Buffet, 3630 Spencer Hwy. in Pasadena. Contact Bob Lockhart at 713-475-0092.

Sept. 18 (Thur.) 7 p.m. Montgomery County Meeting at the South County Community Center, 2235 Lake Robbins Drive, The Woodlands. Contact Ron Hard at ronhard54@msn.com or 281-363-9211.

Sept. 26-28 (Fri.-Sun.) 2003 Gun Rights Policy Conference at Airport Marriott, Houston. Come meet national gun rights leaders and fellow grassroots activists at this **free** conference. Topics include youth violence, "smart" guns, city lawsuits, concealed carry legislation, gun show regulation, legal scholarship, state and local action. Books, monographs and other materials are free as are Saturday luncheon, Friday and Saturday evening receptions and morning and afternoon snack breaks. Register by email to GRPC2003@saf.org. Hotel registrations may be made at 1-800-228-9290 at \$89 per night for conference attendees. For more information visit www.saf.org or www.ccrkba.org.

Oct. 5 (Sun.) Harris County Meeting at 9614 Oregano Circle. See Sept. 7 for information.

Oct. 11 (Sat.) 1 p.m. Second Saturday Libertarian Lunch at Star Pizza in the Heights. Contact Laura at Laura@Libertyworks.org or 281-997-8141.

Oct. 14 (Tues.) 7 p.m. Brazoria County Meeting at Golden Corral, Hwy 388 Business, Angleton. Contact George Harper at Gharper@sat.net or 979-964-3693.

Oct. 16 (Thurs.) 7 p.m. San Jacinto Supper Club see Sept. 18 for details.

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