

LP Ballot Access Bill Filed with State Legislature



A version of our ballot access bill was filed February 28, 2005. The bill, which ends primary screenout, is listed as HB 1721 and is described as "relating to eligibility of voters to sign ballot access petitions." Representative Todd Baxter (R-Austin) is the sponsor.

Current election law requires each petition page to have printed at the top a statement that must be read to potential signers that says: "I have not voted in a primary election or participated in a convention of another party during this voting year, and I understand that I become ineligible to do so by signing this petition. I under-

stand that signing more than one petition to entitle a party to have its nominees placed on the general election ballot in the same election is prohibited."

HB 1721 removes this requirement.

Current law says anyone who voted in a primary can't sign the petition of an alternative party. HB 1721 changes the law to say that signing a petition is not "an act of affiliation" and removes the prohibition on affiliating with another party during the voting year.

HB 1721 also almost doubles the amount of time we have to circulate petitions. Current law restricts petitioning to the 75 days following the March conventions. The bill would allow petitions to begin circulating at the start of the voting year of the election—giving us 144 days in most cases.

Election law now prohibits anyone who signs a candidate's petition to be on a primary ballot from signing our petitions. This prohibition is removed and these people may now sign alternative party petitions, although they are still banned from participating in the primary election of a party other than the one for which they supported a candidate.

One drawback to HB 1721 is that it bans petitioners from circulating more than one petition. Polk County Chair Kris Overstreet points out that this could make professional circulators more expensive to hire and outlaw cooperative circulation efforts. Several of our petitioners in the 2004 drive were circulating both LP and Ralph Nadar petitions, which would not be legal under the new law.

However, overall this bill if passed will mean easier ballot access.

Wes Benedict Announces for Austin City Council

State Executive Director Wes Benedict announced March 1 that he was taking a leave of absence from his LP job to run for Austin City Council.

Wes ran for City Council in 2004 and earned 30% of the vote.

"While I enjoy working hard for the Libertarian Party, sometimes I want to have some fun. Running for office for me is very fun. I could spend a few thousand dollars and a couple months on a vacation somewhere, but I'd have more fun running for city council," Wes reports.

However, he doesn't plan a "holiday" campaign. He believes he has a chance to win. His campaign plan calls for distribution of 1,000 yard

signs and 50,000 flyers. He expects to motivate lots of volunteers and is seeking donations from Austin Libertarians. His website will be launched soon at www.wesbenedict.com.

Other Libertarians running for local offices in the May 7 election include Kevin Anderson running for Mayor in Anna, SLECT Member Steven Adams running for Austin City Council and State Chair Patrick Dixon running for City Council in Lago Vista.

For more on Kevin's campaign visit www.Kevin.politicalgateway.com. See www.AdamsforAustin.com for information on Steven's campaign. Patrick's campaign site can be found at www.PatDixon.org.





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Submissions of party news, meeting minutes, photographs, biographies of candidates, suggested websites, letters to the editor, etc. is encouraged. Please send to Laura@libertyworks.org to submit.

Around the State: Activist Update

A February 14 press release from the Travis County Libertarian Party concerning Cap Metro's last place ranking among major bus systems in terms of the "Fare Recovery Ratio" led to an interview of **Art DiBianca**, TCLP Treasurer, by News 8 Austin.

"DiBianca found Capital Metro's fare recovery ratio at 95 percent for taxpayers, 5 percent for rider's fare," News 8 reported.

"Unacceptable. This is unacceptable. The national average is 28 percent. We don't understand why Capital Metro can't reach the national average," DiBianca said.

The release pointed out that in most cities the average amount riders pay in fares covers only 28% of the actual costs. However, in Austin riders were only paying less than 5% of their own costs. The TCLP concluded that "from a taxpayers point of view Capital Metro runs the worst large bus system in the United States."

Hays County Chair **Michael Neil** reports that the county has a new website at www.hayscountytp.com. "The goal of the site is to provide Central Texas with local news, information, and a schedule of events of interest to libertarians," Mike said.

Tim Lesback of the Dallas LP is organizing participation in the St. Patrick's Day parade. North Texans wanting to volunteer should contact him for details at tim_lesback@yahoo.com or 214-824-2697.

Harris County Chair **Jeff Daiell** was scheduled to give presentations to two Wharton County Junior College government classes March 1. The first class was to hear about libertarianism in general and the Jeff was to talk about the property rights basis of the Bill of Rights to the second group.

LP of Texas Legislative Advisor **Rock Howard** appeared before the Election Committee last week to speak in favor of HB 377, which is a bill pro-

viding penalties for disclosing certain early voter information before an election has concluded.

A group has formed to fight the trio of sobriety checkpoint bills currently in the legislature. The group opposing HB 50, SB 25, and HB 309 can be found on the web at www.Texansagainstcheckpoints.org.

Don Richards of the Montgomery County LP reports that the party has a website at www.geocities.com/dangbob01/libertar.htm.

Congressman **Ron Paul** was a speaker at the Americans for Prosperity conference and lobby day held Feb. 26-28 in Austin. The group was promoting its "Taxpayer Bill of Rights." Austin City Council Candidate **Steven Adams** also participated.

David Haseltine of Palestine has been appointed Chair for the newly organized Anderson County LP. David can be contacted at dshaseltine@hotmail.com or 903-729-5285.

State Chair Patrick Dixon credits Smith County Chair **Eric Rathbone** with recruiting David.

Patrick Dixon has been active in his campaign for an at-large seat on the Lago Vista City Council. He recently sent a fundraising letter asking for help to purchase advertising in the local paper. Patrick writes that he believes he already has about "150 votes in my pocket" of the expected 800 voter turn-out. He reports that he's running a non-partisan campaign and not attaching any party affiliation to it. He has a professional campaign manager helping him at no cost and he's focusing on local issues.

Donations can be made online at his website www.PatDixon.org or by mail to Dixon for Council, KT Hernandez, Treasurer, 21203 Park Drive, Lago Vista, TX 78645. Lago Vista has no maximum for contributions as long as they are reported and do not come from corporations.

Kristin Thompson, Harris County LP Secretary hosted a garage

Yes, I want the Texas Libertarian Party to Succeed!

Name : _____ Address: _____ City & Zip _____
Phone (evenings): _____ Phone (day): _____ Email: _____
County: _____ Occupation: _____ Employer: _____

- _____ I can distribute Libertarian Party outreach materials.
- _____ I can hold or attend a meeting in my county.
- _____ I can design or host a website for a candidate or county party.
- _____ I am considering running for a local office in 2005.
- _____ I am interested in being an appointed County Chair.

Print this form and mail to:
Libertarian Party
PO Box 27932,
Houston, TX 77227

- _____ Enclosed is a **one-time contribution** to help reach our goals.
- _____ **Monthly Pledge** (please bill my credit card on a monthly basis.)

Amount: ___ \$1,000 ___ \$250 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$30 ___ \$10 ___ Other

Please enclose a check or money order made payable to the Libertarian Party of Texas. (No corporate checks, please.)
Or provide the following information to authorize billing to your credit card.

Name on card: _____ Signature: _____
Visa ___ Mastercard ___ American Express ___ Discover ___
Account number: _____ Expiration: (mm/yy) _____

Federal law requires political committees to report the name, mailing address, and occupation and name of employer for each individual whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 in a calendar year. The Libertarian Party of Texas also submits finance reports to the Texas Ethics Commission.

sale benefiting the local county party February 19. About \$300 was raised from the sale of donated items and a cash donation from White Marriott of Montgomery County.

Kristin and **Laura Coker-Garcia**, who both also donated items, worked six hours at the sale. Others giving items to sell included **Monica Granger, John Kormylo, Robert Mayer, and Marie Angell**. Unsold items were donated to charity.

Montgomery County Chair **Gil Guillory** is hosting a private seminar/discussion group for those interested in Austrian economics, Libertarianism, and Anarcho-capitalism. The group plans to meet one evening a month. Those interested should contact Gil.Guillory@haliburtan.com.

James Hammett of Austin has started a LP meetup. Next time is March 23, 8:00 p.m. Triumph Cafe, Austin. See www.meetup.com.

Oklahoma Seeks Support

Oklahoma LP State Chair Steve Galpin reports that HB 1429, their ballot access bill, now has a senate sponsor. The Party is trying to raise about \$1,500 to help pass this bill. They want to do a 2,000 piece mailing to get supporters to contact their representatives and another mailing to the Senate Committee members who will be considering the bill.

Donations to the project can be sent OKLP, P.O. Box 14042, Tulsa, OK 74139-1042.

Zap Awards Announced

The Institute for Justice announces a new prize for those who advance liberty. The "ZAP! Award" Recognizes Those Who Take Bad Laws Off the Books.

Do you know someone who

made America more free by removing a law that restrained economic liberty, curtailed free speech, restricted property rights, or otherwise reigned in individual liberty? The Institute for Justice's "ZAP! Award"--a coveted prize--is presented to lawyers who remove bad laws from the books.

"ZAP! Award" nominations are accepted throughout the year and may be directed to Elizabeth Moser, emoser@ij.org or call (202) 955-1300 for more information.

National Dues to Double

The Libertarian National Committee voted February 27 at their meeting in Portland, Oregon to raise the dues for renewing National Party Members from \$25 to \$50.

Dues for the new memberships will remain at \$25. UMP payments to the states will not increase.

Events of Interest to Texas Libertarians

March 2 (Wed.) 12:30 p.m. John Stossel speaker, Better Business Bureau, El Paso. Tickets \$65 general public, \$50 members. Contact 577-0195 for information or www.elpaso.bbb.org.

March 2 (Wed.) 6 p.m. John Stossel, speaker, Citizens Against Lawsuit Abuse Rio Grande Valley, Weslaco. For information contact 956-968-4594 or bill@valleychamber.com.

March 3 (Thur.) 6 p.m. John Stossel speech, "Why do Some Nations Flourish While Others Flounder," Houston World Affairs Council. Tickets \$20. Westin Oaks Hotel, 5011 Westheimer, Houston. For more information see www.houstonworldaffairs.org.

March 3 (Thur.) School Board Candidate Workshops in Abilene, Amarillo, Edinberg, El Paso, and Mt. Pleasant. Free two-hour workshops from the Texas Association of School Boards give real-life, practical advice about campaigning, getting elected, and serving on local school boards. Usually includes a panel of experienced board members. For time and location call 800-580-8272 or email brenda.canul@tasb.org

March 5 (Sat.) Local Election Day. School Bond Elections in Round Rock and Dripping Springs. Check local news for more information.

March 6 (Sun.) 2 p.m. Harris County LP meeting, Houston. Contact Jeff Daiell at jeffdaiell@yahoo.com or 713-777-1776 for information.

March 8 (Tues.) 7 p.m. Tarrant County LP meeting, Jason's Deli, 2400 Airport Fwy, Ste. 120, Bedford. For information contact Larry Nickerson at 817-370-0941 or hlarrynickerson@hotmail.com.

March 12 (Sat.) Noon to 4 p.m. SLECT Meeting, China King Buffet, 2402 Texas Ave. S., College Station. Phone 979-694-7959 for directions. Contact Chair@lptexas.org for information. Lunch available for \$7.30 per person.

March 19 (Sat.) Noon Dallas County LP meeting, Rockfish Grill, 5331 E. Mockingbird #160, Dallas. For information contact Tim Lebsack at 214-824-2697 or tim.lebsack@yahoo.com.

March 19 (Sat.) 2 p.m. Collin County LP meeting,

IHOP, 933 N. Central Exp., Plano. Contact Michelle Shingal at 469-877-4661 or lptxcollincountychair@yahoo.com.

March 19 (Sat.) 4 p.m. Denton County LP meeting, Rockfish Grill, 2601 S. Highway 35E, Lewisville. Contact Mike Ellsberry at 972-317-0217 or marinds@yahoo.com.

March 24 (Thur.) School Board Candidate Workshop, ESC Region 17 Lecture Hall, 1111 West Loop 289, Lubbock.. Free two-hour workshop on running for local school board. Contact 806-792-4000 for information.

March 30 (Wed.) 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. Small Gifts for Small Groups and Grassroots Fundraising workshop in Wichita Falls. Enjoy breakfast with speaker Andy Robinson who will help you learn everything you need to know to approach donors for \$500 to \$5,000 gifts. Cost \$25 includes breakfast, held at the Non-Profit Management Center, 2301 Kell Blvd., (Wells Fargo Building), Wichita Falls. Call 940-322-4961 or email nonprofitctr@cst.net to register or for more information.

April 15 (Fri.) 9 a.m. to Noon. NRA-ILA Grassroots Workshop, Hilton Americas Hotel, 1600 Lamar Street, Houston. This free workshop includes an 8 a.m. free breakfast. How to advance and protect your Second Amendment freedoms, will "provide you with the materials and strategies you will need to educate and empower your fellow gun owners." Registration and information at 800-392-8683 or www.nraam.org/seminars/grassroots.

April 15-17 (Fri.-Sun.) National Rifle Association Annual Conference, George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston. Harris County Libertarians organizing outreach at event. Volunteers contact Jeff Daiell at jeffdaiell@yahoo.com for time and location.

April 23 (Sat.) 4:23 p.m. 2nd Annual Houston NORML Benefit, Last Concert Cafe, 1403 Nance Street, Houston. HCLP Chair Jeff Daiell and former LP Congressional candidate Brent Sullivan will be speaking. Also, 8 bands. Tickets \$10. Contact jeffdaiell@yahoo.com for information.

May 7 (Sat.) Nonpartisan Municipal Election Day.