



san mateo county

libertarian

the newsletter for the Libertarian Party of San Mateo County

fall 2012

image: Robert Santorelli

message from the chair

By Harland Harrison

What is wrong with the USA - Part 2

Libertarians know something has gone terribly wrong with the USA. Many Libertarians just want to get back to the Constitution. While our government certainly does not adhere to its original meaning, the Constitution, itself, causes much of the problem. The people are not the problem; the problem is the system. Obeying the Constitution would help, but that alone would not perfect the US government.

No matter how good or bad, we must first obey our Constitution because the Rule of Law requires that. The Rule of Law is the oldest civil liberty. When the big guy ruled everything, any way he wanted, people had no rights. Yet, at least you could write down what he said, and remind him about it the next time the same issue came up. Eventually subjects came to expect that a ruler would honor precedent, and decide the same way he did before. Stare Decisis and Rule of Law had become legal principles, thousands of years ago. In the Biblical Book of Esther, from 500 BC, the king, Xerxes I, cannot repeal his own decree:

Esther 8:8 "No document written and sealed by the king can be revoked"

(Netanyahu may have been thinking of something else, though, when he gave Obama a copy of the Book of Esther.)

The weak central government of the Constitution offers some protection to citizens, but the original design protected the power of the states. The new government united the sovereign states like independent countries, much like the European

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Union does today. The open secret of this "union" was the States' Right to perpetuate slavery. The plantation system had made a few slave owners very rich and very powerful. To preserve their power, the Constitution included "3/5 of a man", the extradition of slaves, a maximum \$10 tariff on imported slaves for 20 years, the "balanced" Senate, and tax-free exportation of their products. Cotton was the growth industry of the day. The Constitution guaranteed that slaves would cultivate it for their masters another "four-score and seven" years.

The Constitution skillfully structured a government like England's Parliament, but its wisdom has decayed over time. Using 13 states as Senate and Electoral College districts made some sense in 1787. The colonies resembled different countries, somewhat like EU members. But the states added later were gerrymandered districts. The Missouri Compromise deliberately created more slave states to maintain Senate balance. You can see the straight-line boundaries of government at work in Western states. People divide along natural boundaries like rivers and mountains; governments impose separations along straight, surveyed, lines.

Now, special interests profit from the modern unequal districting. Don't blame the people for voting in their own interest. Farm states provide Senate votes more cheaply; fewer citizens get paid off for each Senator. States with majority demographics are written off before Presidential campaigns even begin, because all electors go to the winning party. (CA already belongs to the Democrats; DC can ignore Libertarian dissent.)

End of Part 2. If you don't see Part 3, either I have been censored or you need to renew your LPSM membership.

For Liberty,

Harland Harrison

Chair, Libertarian Party of San Mateo County

there are 9 tax increases on the november ballot for san mateo county alone...



VOTE!



ref: http://www.ballotpedia.org/wiki/index.php/San_Mateo_County,_California_ballot_measures

slow down: it's the law

by Paul Lazaga

"Slow Down. It's the Law." We see signs like this everywhere we drive, either fixed post signs or lighted billboards; whether it's Slow Down, Fasten Your Seat Belts, Move Over, Don't Litter, or the multitude of other "It's the Law" commands.

It isn't only through driving that we are introduced to these "It's the Law" commands. Government jurisdictions give this justification with unthinking self-righteousness daily. If you inquire from many official bodies why you need to do one thing or not do another, they will commonly reply "because it's the law".

I seem to remember this from my childhood, except it wasn't the state or the police telling me this, it was my mother or father. Their reply to my questions was "because I said so", which as a reason, amounts to the same thing as "it's the law". The difference is that when we are very young this simplistic response, while convenient for our parents, can also reasonably be attributed to our lack of decision making capability. As we mature, we tend to expect a little more information from our parents.

The state and the police do not see a need to offer any information other than "it's the law" in announcing their authority to the masses. In fact, questioning this "reason" can result in unpleasant consequences to the questioner. For proof, ask questions while going through an airport security checkpoint, or when pulled over by a policeman.

I tend to see this resistance as an insult to my critical thinking ability. A blunt "it's the law" given as a reason demonstrates the attitude of government toward you and I: we are considered lesser beings.

Common sense laws are written to give information and warn us about things that aren't safe, tolerated, or acceptable to society in a general sense, and in a specific sense, indicate impinging upon another's rights. Or, in the case of taxation, to

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theoretically take resources from people for a determined collective good.

While we can all certainly debate on the merits of many laws and the result of their enforcement, I am increasingly disturbed by the attitude of the government class that feels the only explanation that must be given for enforcement is "because we said so".

In the case of your daily commute or other travels, wouldn't it be more civilized to have signs that educate us? Such as "Slow Down. Unsafe Conditions" or "Move Over for Officer Safety"?

Personal decisions of what is right cannot be imposed by law, but can be fostered by them to bring enlightenment to our thinking process during our busy days.

Authoritarian presumption is becoming a governmental habit. Eventually the state won't just presume authority, they will assume it. So beware of complacency with what you might consider trivial items such as road signs.

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This is *your* LPSM, and *your* newsletter. Please don't hesitate to write to us with any questions or feedback. A newsletter submission can be on any libertarian topic, but should include references unless it is an opinion piece or essay.

Know a good place to distribute newsletters? Want to sponsor a mailing? Let us know!

*PDF copies of the newsletter will eventually be available from the **lpsm.org** website, or contact vicechair@lpsm.org.*

those terrible plastic bags

by Don Pettengill

Banning (or equivalently, taxing) plastic bags is a very bad idea.

Plastic bag re-use:

In my household, we reuse almost all of our plastic bags as bin liners. When we had a dog, they served well as poopholders. That is a much more efficient use of resources than if we have to separately buy plastic bags for the same purposes. Everyone we know does the same. I don't believe the "4.3% recycling rate" EPA "study" from 2010, cited in a blog called "Bag Monster".

Increase in costs:

Consumers will have to pay for the privilege of getting their groceries home. Is there no end to the expense of government mandate after government mandate? This is the worst economy since the great depression. We do NOT need another costly mandate.

Food safety:

Reusable bags for foodstuffs pose a danger to public health, as the bags become dirty and harbor potentially dangerous bacteria. This is already happening as re-usable bags become more popular.

Detrimental effects on our environment:

An article in the Wall Street Journal printed earlier this summer cites a study that found, "the average supermarket shopper would have to reuse the same cotton tote from 94 up to 1,899 times before it had less environmental impact than the disposable plastic bags needed to carry the same amount of groceries."

The environmental impacts of making and washing the re-usable bag must also be considered. When they are, the plastic bag is shown to be beneficial.

Furthermore, studies of landfills show the persistence of even supposedly "biodegradable" materials, for decades and even centuries. "Plastic never biodegrades" is an irrelevant sound bite. In a well-managed landfill, many things do not biodegrade - paper can last for millennia.

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There is no pressing environmental or public health issue with plastic bags. San Mateo County should stick to fixing potholes and ensuring the safety of our food and water, rather than catering to the uninformed views of misguided activists.

references

["Reusable grocery bag carried nasty norovirus, scientists say"](http://vitals.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/05/09/11604166-reusable-grocery-bag-carried-nasty-norovirus-scientists-say?lite)
http://vitals.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/05/09/11604166-reusable-grocery-bag-carried-nasty-norovirus-scientists-say?lite

["Reusable Grocery Bags Contaminated With E. Coli, Other Bacteria"](http://uanews.org/node/32521)
<http://uanews.org/node/32521>

["Bans on Plastic Bags Harm the Environment"](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303822204577468790467880880.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEFTSecondBucket#articleTabs%3Darticle)
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303822204577468790467880880.html?mod=WSJ_Opinion_LEFTSecondBucket#articleTabs%3Darticle

<http://www.bagmonster.com/2011/12/plastic-bag-recycling-rates.html>

leading libertarians endorse prop 34 to abolish capital punishment

by Harland Harrison

Libertarian candidates for President and VP, Gary Johnson and Judge James Gray, have endorsed California Proposition 34, the "SAFE California" initiative to abolish capital punishment. In a recent letter to the LPSM, the candidates explained their support for SAFE California which will become part of their Presidential campaign message in our state. Prop 34 would replace the death penalty with a sentence of life without the possibility of parole. Existing death sentences would be commuted. They point out that the capital punishment wastes money, delivers the revenge it promises in very few cases, and could result in executing the wrong person. Gary Johnson and Judge James Gray ask for the LPSM to endorse Prop 34 and to give it our support.

Should the LPSM endorse Prop 34 to abolish the death penalty? Please let the LPSM Executive Committee know what you think. (Contact information is on p. 4 of this newsletter. -Ed.) While the ACLU supports this initiative, some Libertarians may oppose it.

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The candidates write that the death penalty has cost California \$4 billion since it was reenacted in 1978. During those 33 years, only 13 executions have actually taken place. Proponents of SAFE California now project savings of \$184 million per year, while the official description on the Secretary of State's web site only commits to "annual savings in the high tens of millions".

While the death-penalty cases cost hundreds of millions per person actually executed, serious crimes go unsolved. "A shocking 46% of homicides and 56% of reported rapes go unsolved in California each year," the candidates write. The initiative appropriates a one-time expenditure of \$100 million to create a fund for investigating these crimes.

The current system runs the risk of killing an innocent person. Across the country, 140 people have already been released from death row because they finally proved they did not commit the crime for which they were convicted. Just in California, last year alone, three men were exonerated of murder after spending a total of 57 years in prison.

Readers can read more from the initiative's proponents at:

<http://safeCalifornia.org>

The site includes the chilling story of Carlos de Luna who was executed in 1989 for a murder apparently committed by another man named Carlos Hernandez.

To donate or volunteer for SAFE California, contact:

Ana Zamora, SAFE California Campaign

(415) 971-2447

ana@safecalifornia.org

Please send comments on the initiative for publication in the LPSM Newsletter to:

Lois Garcia

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leading libertarians endorse prop 34 to abolish capital punishment, continued from page 6

san mateo county libertarian party

I'm Joining the Libertarian Party of California!

Yes! I want to become a member of the Libertarian Party of California.

- \$25 Dues
- \$ _____ Additional one-time gift
- \$ _____ Monthly Pledge (\$10/month minimum; counts as dues)
- \$2,000 Life Membership

Mail completed remittance form to (and make checks payable to):

The Libertarian Party of California

14547 Titus Street, Suite 214 - Panorama City, CA 91402-4935
office@ca.lp.org - (818) 782-8400 - www.ca.lp.org

The Libertarian Party is the Party of Principle. To publicly affirm our belief and ensure that our party never strays from our principles, we ask members to proudly sign and date this statement:

I certify that I do not believe in or advocate the initiation of force as a means of achieving political or social goals.

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Check or money order enclosed. Monthly pledgers please include a voided check to authorize automatic monthly payments,
Or: Please bill my Visa MasterCard AmEX Discover

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Notice: Federal law requires political committees to report the name, address, occupation, and employer of each donor whose contributions total more than \$200 in a calendar year. Political contributions are not tax deductible.

SM11-110

**LPSM supper club
& business meeting**

IHOP Restaurant
510 El Camino Real, Belmont

**6:30-7:30pm Dinner/Conversation
everyone welcome**

**7:30-8:45pm Business Session
dues-paying members only**

**held every third Tuesday
of the month
January - October**

**libertarian party of san mateo county
PO Box 745
Belmont CA 94002**