

The Voice of Freedom

The Libertarian Party of Tennessee
Ray Ledford, Chairman (Chair@lptn.net)
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January 2004
www.lptn.net
The Party of Principle

LPTN Web Site Number One

(Nashville) - The Libertarian Party of Tennessee announced that its website, www.lptn.net, has surpassed those of the Republicans and Democrats, according to Alexa Internet.

Alexa Internet, an Amazon company in partnership with Google, tracks the surfing habits of millions of users in order to rank web site popularity among the estimated 45 million registered domains. Alexa uses a statistical average that factors in both the number of unique visitors and the number of page views over a three-month period. While measuring and comparing Internet traffic is a difficult task and no system is perfect, the Alexa rank is generally considered the de facto industry standard.

The Libertarian Party of Tennessee redesigned its website just under one year ago, and its popularity may already allow it to claim to be the most visited political party website in Tennessee. According to the November 15, 2003 Alexa rankings, the Libertarian Party of Tennessee is at number 965,338, just past the Tennessee Democratic Party (number 965,358), and far ahead of the Tennessee GOP at number 2,310,000.

The chairman of the Libertarian Party of Tennessee, Ray Ledford, explains the website's increasing popularity: "Our webmaster and designer is constantly working to keep the content new and interesting, but more importantly, our message of individual Liberty is being accepted by more and more people who have begun to feel unrepresented and discarded by the Democrats and Republicans."

The Libertarian Party of Tennessee is the fastest growing political party in Tennessee, attracting liberty-minded citizens concerned with curbing out-of-control government, runaway taxation, and attacks on individual rights.

Share the Voice of Freedom with your friends,
find it online at www.lptn.net!

Liberty Quotes Published

Liberty Quotes, which is a collection of liberty-themed quotations put together by the late Richard E. Pearl, Sr., is now available at 1stbooks.com.

The book lists for \$4.95 for the e-book version, \$12.50 for the paperback, and \$20.00 for the glossy hardcover.

Liberty Quotes was one of Richard's dreams, and was completed after his death by Steve Trinward. All the profits from Liberty Quotes will be set aside in a fund for the grandsons Richard loved dearly.

Buyers of this book will find it a useful reference, as well as a cherished link to a wonderful man and a great Defender of Liberty.

LPTN Convention Announced

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

The LPTN Convention will be held on April 3rd. The location and times have not yet been announced. Stay tuned to lptn.net for more updates.

Michael Badnarik visits Tennessee Libertarian Presidential Hopeful

Michael Badnarik will be in Chattanooga on March 1st and in Memphis on March 2nd. For more information on Michael's events in Tennessee contact Trevor Southerland at TrevSoutherland@aol.com

You can also visit the Badnarik Campaign website at www.badnarik.org
Last weekend in May, See YOU in Atlanta!

(This advertisement has been approved by the candidate.)

From the Chair

Dear friends,

The holidays are upon once again, but the struggle to preserve Liberty continues still. And there's always something new to tell you – we have a new database administrator, there have been some changes in county leadership, our website has outranked those of the other political parties in Tennessee, and some personal news.

In an effort to make our database management quicker, cleaner, and more efficient, we will soon have the LPTN database online. I've named Jonathan Wright, our webmaster, to be our Database Administrator. Once the database is online, county chairs will be able to access the records for their respective counties, and make any necessary changes with the knowledge that National will be notified.

Sadly, two of our county chairs – Joey King of the Libertarian Party of Rutherford County, and Tayloe Nickey of the Libertarian Party of Shelby County, have made the decision to step out of their chairmanships for now. Joey has gotten a third job, and Tayloe just wants a breather. They'll be missed as county leaders, but both counties have great leadership teams – besides, Joey and Tayloe are still a part of the wonderful bunch of Tennessee Libertarians.

Our website continues to improve – both in quality and popularity. The LPTN.net website recently outranked both the websites of the Republicans and Democrats, according to Alexa Internet, and the other third parties didn't even come close.

Ordinarily, I don't like to say anything in this column about me. It's always been my goal to talk about all of you – but I'm distressed and I wanted to share my problem with my Libertarian family. Some of you may have heard that my wife, Helen, and I had gotten happy news in October – a baby was on its way, due in June. Everything has been progressing nicely until an OB visit in mid-November; the baby had died. This was our fourth pregnancy, our fourth miscarriage.

It's hard to think of anything else right now; as I write this column, we got the news just two days ago. On the last ultrasound, I saw legs, arms, and one of the eyes – it looked just as the books said it would. We had nicknamed the baby Yam-Yam, at least until we knew the sex. Now it's the only name the baby will ever have.

There is very little news in my column for this edition, and it's difficult to think of little else except for the loss Helen and I have had. Please let Helen know you're

thinking of her by emailing your condolences at catchick1@juno.com.

And Yam-Yam, you would have been a part of a great Libertarian family. They're good people, and I love every one of them.

I apologize for ending this on such a sad note, and I want to thank everyone for your kindness, and for caring enough about Liberty in Tennessee to have made the Libertarian Party of Tennessee your political home.

Pro libertate,

Ray Ledford

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From the Webmaster

Hello again Tennessee libertarians!

I've got some more <http://www.lptn.net> updates to tell you about, plus a pleasant bit of news. I hate to tease, but I suppose we should start with the updates.

Primarily, we've made some changes in the news & features sections of the site -- some organizational, some purely visceral. Notably, the "features" no longer disappear when they rotate off the homepage, and also now the news articles can be browsed in the order posted without regard to category. The rotated-off features is now in use, and the reorganized news section is in it's same home. Of course if you want, you still can browse the news by category, you can jump right to a particular category by clicking the icon next to any article in the news index.

Speaking of news & features, we've got a couple new ones for you:

First find out all about the 2004 Ladies of Liberty calendar ... rumor has it that it features a certain Wilson County commissioner that some of you may know :)

And be sure to check out our new "Back to Basics" news category, where we'll post some of liberty's most enduring works (read: old enough to be public domain :) for your perusal. The first two entries are Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience", and Davy Crockett's "Not Yours To Give".

Finally one more new item in the realm of news: the lptn.net homepage now also features links to the top 5 news items and top 5 commentaries of libertarian interest from around the web, as chosen by, and rotated daily courtesy of, our friends at Rational Review via the Rational Review News Digest.

And now at last the exciting news I promised. Actually I lied, there are in fact two nice tidbits --

First, at just under one year since the new website went online, we've reached a notable milestone, passing the 1 Gigabyte per month bandwidth mark with over 1.27GB transferred in October 2003! This leaps past our previous record of 788 Megabytes in April 2003, which itself was a spike, probably brought on by the war in Iraq. But the figures have been steadily growing since that time, and this new record does not look like a spike.

Second and even more exciting, we've pushed our way into the top million sites in the rankings at Alexa.com. But that's not the best part -- at number 965,338, we've just nudged past the Tennessee Democratic Party (number 965,358), and we've walloped the Tennessee GOP at number 2,310,000! Figures aren't available for the TN Greens, but since the _national_ Green Party's site ranks only in the mid 400K range (compared to lp.org at just over 18,000), it's a pretty safe bet to say that lptn.net is now the most visited political party site in Tennessee! Until next time, In liberty,

Jonathan Wright

Banner Contest Continues

The Voice of Freedom is still looking for a new masthead. Submissions will be accepted immediately through February 1, 2004. Digital submissions can be emailed to VOF Editor Trevor Southerland (vof_editor@lptn.net). You can also mail submissions to Trevor M. Southerland, 848 McCallie Avenue, Apt. 4, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37403-2625. The winner of the contest will receive a Liberty Penguin enamel pin and a signed copy of Frogg Pond, by Steve Cason, courtesy of the Libertarian Party of Tennessee as well as a copy of Liberty Quotes by the late Richard Pearl, Sr.

Thank you for your continued support of the VOF.

McMinn County Update

ROBERT CALLAWAY

The McMinn County Libertarian Party (MCLP) led the charge against a County property tax increase in 2001. The resistance failed to accomplish its goal with radio spots, demonstrations outside the courthouse and rallying other citizens to voice their opinions to the Commission. Five of the eight Commissioners who voted for the tax increase were defeated in the next election. Now the City of Athens, the County Seat of McMinn County, is attempting to raise taxes. The MCLP is using a different strategy this time which seems to be working better. Instead of standing alone, we established a group called AthensNoTax which has gathered support from those who are not libertarians. City officials are unable to label tax opposition efforts to a fringe group. To see how the effort is being managed, go to <http://athensnotax.net>

Shelby County Update

TAYLOE NICKEY

The Shelby County Libertarians held elections in August and elected a new executive board. Returning as President is Tayloe Nickey, new Shelby Countian John Storey was elected Vice President, Treasurer is Hal Rounds, and Secretary is Melissa Shaw.

Our biggest news lately is that long time member Vernie Kuglin was recently found not guilty on all counts of federal income tax evasion. Several Shelby Libs were able to attend portions of Vernie's trial in federal court. It was very interesting. Vernie convinced the jury that she was not liable for income tax payment. Way to go Vernie! We are currently seeing if there is enough local interest to bring Libertarian Presidential Candidate Michael Badnarik to Shelby County for his eight hour Constitution class. Michael spoke at this year's State convention in April in Nashville. He's a great speaker and we'd like to bring him to Memphis.

We've had some lively debate on our Yahoo group site (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lpsc/>) about the Free State Movement and about candidates running as Republicans instead of Libertarians. Please check out the group postings at the above URL. As readers are probably aware, New Hampshire was recently selected as the "Free State" to which Libertarians are supposed to move. Hopefully enough Libertarians will move to New Hampshire so that we can finally have a whole state that adheres to Libertarian principles. That would be way cool. Hal Rounds and Tayloe Nickey have both expressed interest in moving to New Hampshire, but they could be all talk.

We recently voted to return to Panchos restaurant for monthly meetings. It is much quieter than Cozymel's restaurant where we've been meeting lately. I think I will miss Cozymel's though.....Projects we hope to pursue this year are sponsoring an "Operation Politically Homeless" booth at a local fair or gun show and perhaps some kind of protest at the airport about the way-too-intrusive homeland security search procedures for airline passengers.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Michael Badnarik will be in Memphis on Tuesday March 2nd for his Constitution Class.

Contact information for all of the LPTN's local and college affiliate can be found at www.lptn.net. If you know one which needs to be updated or corrected e-mail chair@lptn.net and it will be fixed immediately.

PROFILE: Tayloe Nickey, Shelby County

(Staff) – Note: This series will spotlight various Libertarians in Tennessee. If you know of an interesting Libertarian in Tennessee, contact Trevor Southerland (vof_editor@lptn.net) or Ray Ledford (chair@lptn.net).

The Voice Of Freedom recently sat down and conducted an email interview with Tayloe Nickey, who had been leading the Libertarian Party of Shelby County since last year.

Q: Tell us a little about yourself. You know, education, profession, wife and/or kids-- that kind of thing?

Tayloe: I am 46, a life long Memphian, never married. I am happily dating as many women as I can however. I have an undergraduate degree in studio art from the University of Virginia (big waste of my dad's money), and an MBA from Southern Methodist University (my dad did a little better with that one). I develop and manage commercial real estate. I like to paint pictures and go kayaking and watch movies. I am a regular attendee of the annual Memphis in May barbecue contest as a member of The Not Ready For Swine Time Pokers barbecue team.

Q: How and when did you become a Libertarian?

Tayloe: I don't specifically remember becoming a Libertarian. I just gradually started to realize that most of the trouble in the world comes from government, and I wanted to fight against that. I started to attend Libertarian events and meetings about 5 or 6 years ago. I used to think that Libertarians were mostly disgruntled Republicans, but our LPSC has people with many different backgrounds including disgruntled Republicans, disgruntled Democrats, former independents, and never-anything-but-Libertarians.

Q: Are you still glad you made that decision?

Tayloe: Yes!!!!!!!!!!!!

Q: Do you plan to run for public office in the future?

Tayloe: I have no interest in running for office. I would be glad to help [our Shelby County candidates] or other Libertarians run again, but I do not wish to seek office myself. I'd rather stay behind the scenes.

Q: The Libertarian Party of Shelby County is a very active county affiliate. Are you pleased with the party's progress in the past year?

Taylor: Well, it could have been a lot better. We are like a lot of local Libertarian groups - we are understaffed and under funded. I'm not a huge marketing guy, so I don't know how to increase attendance at meetings, but that is one of the things we need. A lot of initiatives that we start have tended to fizzle out simply because of the lack of people to keep them going. I hope we are able to attract more people in the future. We have, however, run several people in several local elections, and have gotten a lot of press for the Libertarian Party. None of our candidates have won yet, but we are getting better at organization. I'm pleased with the solid regular attendance of our monthly meetings by a core group of very serious Libertarians

Q: Unfortunately, you recently announced your decision to step down as LPSC President for a breather. What are your plans now?

Taylor: We have some very able members on our LPSC executive Committee. I plan to support them and continue to support LPSC with my time and dollars. The Free State Project intrigues me. I would like to visit New Hampshire to see if I could stand to live that far north!

Tennessee's Lady of Liberty

(Staff) -- Heather Scott is a Wilson County commissioner, the Wilson County LP chair, LPTN Vice Chair, and now she's a Lady of Liberty -- a calendar that features Libertarian ladies from across the country. The Voice Of Freedom recently caught up with Heather and interviewed her about the calendar.

Q: How did you become a part of the Ladies of Liberty calendar? Were you asked, or did you contact them?

Heather: Steve Trinward sent me an email of encouragement. Rachel Mills, the genius behind the calendar, asked everyone to write a short essay on what it means to be a Lady of Liberty. I sent in my entry and I was chosen to be one of the lucky Ladies of Liberty.

Q: I understand that the photography was done in the Nashville area. Did the photographer know what it was for? Did he/she seem interested in the LP?

Heather: Paul Wharton, Wharton Photography, Mt. Juliet, TN took the photos. I told him it was for a calendar, but did not go into detail. I'm planning to give him an

overview of the LP when I deliver a copy of the calendar to him.

Q: Has your husband begun to brag about being married to a calendar model?

Heather: LOL!

Q: What are your feelings about the concept? In what way do you think it will help the LP?

Heather: As you know, Libertarians have to be creative in getting our message to the public. This calendar is a creative way to catch the media's attention as well as raise funds for LP candidates. I hope the funds will help more LP candidates get elected to office. Without more LP members in office, our "business as usual" political system will keep on taking our liberty and our money.

Q: Although this has nothing to do with the calendar, how well do you think you've done in your first year as a Wilson County commissioner?

Heather: I believe that I've added some fresh air to our commission. I feel like my ability to question an issue has encouraged others on the commission question as well. I've been able to plant Libertarian seeds when I'm asked about my reasons for voting the way I do. For example, the county gives away money to various charities every year. I was the only one to vote no. When asked about it, I explained it's not a function of government to take the taxpayers money and give it to charity.

I've really spent the first year learning the system and building alliances. Some advice for future office holders - learn Roberts Rules of Order.

The thing that has been the biggest surprise to me is the lack of attention citizens pay to local government. One of our commissioners passed away recently. The commission was faced with the responsibility of appointing a replacement to fill the remainder of the term. I did not hear from a single person in that district. I even wrote a letter to the local paper asking the constituents of that district for their input.

Q: Finally, would you tell our readers what month is yours?

Heather: For just a small investment of \$16.95, you'll see my photo all during the month of March and on the back cover.

US Government and God

ROBERT CALLAWAY

Local governments across the state are being encouraged by conservative religious groups to adopt a Proclamation "to publicly recognize God As the Foundation of Our National Heritage..."

The theme of the resolution is that the Founders were driven religiously while establishing the nation. The resolution also references the Alabama Ten Commandments Case as an example of God being driven out of government. It is odd that persons proclaiming to adhere to the Ten Commandments and a belief in God's Word demands thou "shall not bear false witness", should write such a blatant falsehood concerning the founding of our nation.

It is true that the Pilgrims came to escape persecution by the church of England. What is just as true, is those same Pilgrims persecuted others in America as they had been persecuted. Since the landing at Jamestown and Plymouth there have always been those that have sought to have power over those who held different beliefs. The first contested election on American soil took place on May 17, 1637. At issue were religion and orderly government.

Massachusetts became the home of religious intolerance rather than the home of religious tolerance, as demonstrated by the infamous Salem witch trials of 1692. All who were accused and confessed were released. Fourteen women and five men who maintained they were innocent of witchcraft were judged guilty and hanged. One man, who refused to plead at all, became the only person in America ever put to death by being crushed to death by heavy stones. Ten in Connecticut were hanged for witchcraft.

Other examples of persecution in early America are easily found by any one willing to read history:

Connecticut Law 1642: if "any man after legal conviction shall have or worship any other God but the Lord God, he shall be put to death."

Failure to attend a Puritan church, or speaking critically of its official doctrine, was outlawed and punished by stiff fines.

Kissing one's wife on Sunday was outlawed.

Attendance in a Puritan church was compulsory.

Falling asleep in church was outlawed and whipping was the punishment for repeated offenses.

The first Quakers to arrive in America (1656) were Englishwomen - they were immediately imprisoned and "searched carefully" for witch-marks, kept imprisoned in isolation for five weeks, then sent back to where they came from.

In 1661 the cart and Whip Act (Massachusetts) decreed that all Quakers were to be stripped, tied to a cart's tail,

branded on the left shoulder, and then whipped through every town until they reached the borders of the colony.

A law of 1692 prohibited all work, games, travel, and entertainment on the Sabbath. Violations were punishable by fine, stocks, whipping, or jail. 1692:

In 1718 the Catholics of Maryland were disenfranchised by making the Test Oath a requirement for voting.

Efforts were made to seek religious freedom in other parts of America. Rhode Island was the first colony to establish freedom of religion, settlers in Rhode Island had been driven out of Massachusetts due to religious persecution. The Maryland Toleration Act of 1649 required religious toleration of others - except for outspoken Jews and atheists. Pennsylvania was founded as a haven for Quakers who were persecuted in other colonies. Eleven of the thirteen colonies had religious requirements to be met before one could serve in the state legislature. All were anti Semitic. Despite the power that organized religion held over the colonies at the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the vast majority of Americans did not belong to an organized religious institution. Only 17% of Americans belonged to a church in 1776, it was not until the 20th century when the majority of Americans belonged to a church.

When the Founders met in Philadelphia they were seeking a new type of government. Most did have a strong belief in a God, but few wished to force their views of religion on others. Jefferson, whom was chosen to write the Declaration of Independence, was a deist. The Declaration, which not only declared our Independence from Britain but also set forth the basic principals of our Independence, only mentions "God" in deistic terms such as "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God", "Creator", "the Supreme Judge of the World," and "Divine Providence." Eleven years later when the Constitution was written, the only religious item mentioned was the traditional statement of date at its conclusion "in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven." - no such mention was made in the Declaration of Independence.

It is obvious, regardless of their personal religious beliefs that the Founders wanted to have the new government free of religion. The Founders were well aware of the evils which had been established in both England and the Colonies - they tried their best to not let that evil develop with the new government. The states themselves sought to clarify this by the First Amendment.

Despite this, various religions have constantly fought to have their religion be the official religion of the Nation, many local governments are now making it a little easier for them.

News Flash: Ray Ledford appointed to LP Convention By-Laws Committee, bringing LPTN representatives on convention committees to three.

In Such Manner ...

By Ray Ledford

Ballot access. It's a sought after prize by many a "third party," and certainly the concern of every Libertarian Party state affiliate. Essentially, ballot access represents a legal recognition of your state political party by your state government. We all want it because it "legitimizes" us in the eyes of the electorate. Leaving aside for now the question of why would we want the state to "approve" us, I intend to explore one facet of state recognition of a political party and the Tennessee Constitution.

Tennessee state law requires that after satisfying the established petitioning obstacles, a political party must sign an oath that they will not advocate or attempt the overthrow of the government [Acts 1972, ch. 740, § 1; T.C.A., § 2-114.] Of course, the Libertarian Party has its own oath about the initiation of the use of force, but we all know that government can go bad.

The framers of the Tennessee Constitution knew this, too, which is why they began the Declaration of Rights with this:

"That all power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their peace, safety, and happiness; for the advancement of those ends they have at all times, an unalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform, or abolish the government in such manner as they may think proper.

That government being instituted for the common benefit, the doctrine of nonresistance against arbitrary power and oppression is absurd, slavish, and destructive of the good and happiness of mankind.

(Tennessee Constitution, Article I, Section 1-2)

The Tennessee Constitution clearly defends and protects the right of the people to change or even overthrow the government if it becomes arbitrary and oppressive. What's more, the Tennessee Constitution furthers protects this and the rest of the Declaration of Rights when it states that "[t]he declaration of rights hereto prefixed is declared to be a part of the Constitution of this state, and shall never be violated on any pretense whatever. And to guard against transgression of the high powers we have delegated, we declare that everything in the bill of rights contained, is excepted out of the general powers of the government, and shall forever remain inviolate." (Tennessee Constitution, Article XI, Section 16)

Let's stop now and look at what I've covered: changing or overthrowing an arbitrary or oppressive government is a protected right in the Tennessee Constitution, and yet a political party, in order to be recognized by the state, must take an oath not to exercise that constitutional right.

Now, how could something so unconstitutional as this be allowed to exist? Well, the same folks who wrote the law are the same folks who represent the only two political parties that have been "recognized" as statewide parties – the Republicans and Democrats. Essentially, they are the government, and they want new statewide political parties to swear allegiance to them – Liberty be damned.

If this oath were to be challenged in court, the best thing that could happen would be that the provision requiring the oath would be deemed unconstitutional while leaving the rest of the laws pertaining to political parties intact. Of course, the worst thing that could happen is that the courts would find in favor of the government – a government that is composed of Democrats and Republicans. But that shouldn't surprise anyone; after all, the courts are a part of the government.

Once again, we are faced with the same question liberty-minded people have asked all throughout the history of Tennessee: "quis custodiet ipsos custodes - who will guard the guardians?" Who will protect our rights and liberties from those in government who would usurp them? Who will defend Liberty from this three-headed Hydra that calls itself "the government?" Who will watch those who now watch us?

Granted, the Libertarian Party is the Defender of Liberty, but ultimately, it will take all of us – We, the People – to guard the guardians.

After all, Tennesseans still outnumber the state government.

For now, anyway.

Update from Hamilton Co.

The Hamilton County LP was very encouraged to hear of two events sponsored by the Campus Libertarians of UTC. One being an organizational meeting attended by 9 students and another an Operation Politically Homeless Booth which was seen by over 1,000 people. Exact numbers on how many took the quiz were estimated around 50 by Trevor Southerland, Campus LP President.

The annual caucus of the local party, where by-laws are amended and officers elected will be January 24th in Chattanooga. To find out more visit www.hclp.org or e-mail liberty@utc.edu. You can also call 423-635-2595.

All-Out assault on right to engage in politics

WASHINGTON, DC -- The Libertarian Party, which is one of the plaintiffs that challenged the campaign finance law upheld by the Supreme Court, has denounced the ruling as an "all-out assault on the right of every American to engage in the political process."

"Why not just outlaw elections and get it over with?" said Geoffrey Neale, the Libertarian Party's national chair. "The Supreme Court has just given incumbent politicians the power to financially cripple their competitors and, in the process, award themselves lifetime jobs."

In a 5-4 ruling that shocked advocacy groups across the political spectrum, the Supreme Court endorsed key provisions of the McCain-Feingold campaign finance law. Specifically, the court upheld a ban on "soft money" contributions from wealthy individuals, corporations and labor unions, as well the law's prohibition on running certain political advertisements within close proximity to an election.

But Libertarians point out that McCain-Feingold was nothing more than an incumbent protection act in the first place -- and that the court's ruling was tantamount to outlawing political competition.

"Running for office and communicating a message aren't free," Neale said. "So making it illegal to raise money to buy political ads, and banning the ads during the period when they're most effective, is tantamount to outlawing the message itself. That's a crime against the First Amendment as well as an affront to the democratic process."

Incumbent politicians already enjoy powerful advantages, Neale pointed out, such as name recognition and the ability to attract news media, taxpayer-financed staffs and office space, and the franking privilege. The so-called campaign finance reform act was merely an attempt to eliminate the only weapon that many challengers have: contributions freely given by individuals or groups that share their views, he noted.

Acknowledging that the stated goal of the legislation was to clean up politics, Neale said: "Justice Sandra Day O'Connor pointed out that 'corruption, and in particular the appearance of corruption,' is rampant in Washington -- and of course, she's right.

"But a free-flowing, robust political debate isn't the problem; it's the solution. The only way to dislodge an entrenched, corrupt politician is to allow competing candidates, and anyone else who so chooses, to publicly criticize them and offer voters a better alternative.

"By upholding McCain-Feingold, the Supreme Court has merely guaranteed that corrupt politicians will stay in office for a longer period of time."

In March 2002, the Libertarian Party signed on as a co-plaintiff in *McConnell v FEC*, the lawsuit spearheaded by Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell that sought to overturn the campaign finance reform law.

The party argued that the law would have a devastating impact on its activities by eliminating certain sources of revenue and imposing significant regulatory and administrative burdens.

For example, the law prohibits the organization from accepting donations of more than \$25,000 from any individual; prevents it from taking money from organizations that are not "recognized political committees," so it cannot sell ads in its party newspaper to nonprofit corporations or incorporated businesses; and cannot accept funds for memberships or literature from its own state affiliates, unless they also comply with the law's onerous regulations.

However, the party was vindicated by one aspect of Tuesday's ruling, Neale added, when the court struck down the provision of the law banning minors from making contributions to political parties.

(LPTN member Trevor Southerland was the first minor to sue due to discrimination against minors in the Act.)

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