



# New Jersey Libertarian

Volume XLVIII, Issue 3

## Fall 2023

### Chair's Message: NJLP Statement Regarding The Situation in LD2

by James Ripley - [chair@njlp.org](mailto:chair@njlp.org)

To Our NJ Community and Concerned Citizens, The New Jersey Libertarian Party supports freedom and anonymity of political speech and spending, and opposes efforts to restrict it. Let the public evaluate the credibility of anonymous statements.

NJLP has full confidence that Shawn Peck was and still remains the best candidate to represent LD2 in the NJ Senate. We urge all libertarian, conservative, liberal and independent minded voters in LD2 to disregard this minor controversy and cast a vote for Shawn when you come to the ballot box.

We enjoy Republican establishment worries over losing support of libertarian leaning voters to actual Libertarian candidates. That past support for Republican candidates was unearned in the first place; to earn it, Republicans should respond to issues important to our voters. And if they are truly concerned about this non-problem, it has a well known solution, Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). We encourage our Republican colleagues to support speedier adoption of RCV for State Assembly and Senate races. NJ Senate Republicans refuse to support RCV. When RCV is adopted, Libertarian and independent voters will be able to specify which of the legacy parties would be their second preference. We say this to the Republican Party: Your current predicament is of your own making. By refusing to support RCV, you enable dirty tricks by your opponents, and may well pay the price.

Dear disgruntled Republican voters, are you feeling betrayed and your issues ignored by the GOP establishment? Don't get mad, get even. Take Shawn's lead and run for office in 2024 on a Libertarian ticket. You're not alone. Shawn Peck has surely gotten the attention of GOP leaders by running as a Libertarian, and so could you. We extend the same invitation to Kennedy Democrats who feel their party no longer represents their views. ♦

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### 2023 Annual NJLP Fall General Meeting Announcement

*By General Meeting Staff*

The 2023 NJLP Summer General Meeting will be held on November 18<sup>th</sup> at 12PM at Third State Brewing in Burlington - 352 High Street, Burlington, NJ 08016

The full proposed agenda is posted at [njlp.org/agenda](http://njlp.org/agenda).

♦

## NJLP State Board

Chair, James Ripley	chair@njlp.org
Vice-Chair, Mark Kapengut	vicechair@njlp.org
Treasurer, Carole Acton	treasurer@njlp.org
Secretary, Jade Pao	secretary@njlp.org
VP Membership, Joseph Baratelli	vpmembership@njlp.org
VP Public Relations, Arielle Shack	vppublicrelations@njlp.org
VP Political Affairs, Nathan Cole	vppoliticalaffairs@njlp.org
VP Programs, Lynn Genrich	vpprograms@njlp.org
North Rep., Stephen Honeywell	northrep@njlp.org
Central Rep., Chris Caronna	centralrep@njlp.org
South Rep., Christopher Russomanno	southrep@njlp.org

## Other Party Leadership

North Chair, Arielle Shack	northchair@njlp.org
Central Chair, Daniel O'Neill	centralchair@njlp.org
South Chair, Tim O'Brien	southchair@njlp.org

## Bylaws Committee Report

*by Bylaws Committee*

The Bylaws Committee Mark Kapengut, Ken Kaplan, James Ripley, Arielle Shack and Michael Manieri have approved the following proposals to be considered at the 2023 Fall General Meeting. Proposals 1 and 2 are Business Rules and can be adopted by either the General Meeting or by the State Board on November 14, 2023.

### Proposal 1

Candidates for President.

Modify 10c. Insert "except presidential" in the first sentence of 10c, so it reads, "All candidates, except presidential, must be NJLP members and run under the designation of "Libertarian Party" in partisan elections."

**Rationale:** I would consider this a technical patch. Current 10c collides with our membership clause, when applied to Presidential candidates. The membership requirement translates into residency

requirement. An NJLP member must have a nexus to New Jersey either by living or working in-state. Most of our LP Presidential candidates do not live in NJ. (Unfortunately. Under the current language technically only Dave Smith may be eligible in 2024.)

### Proposal 2

#### Bus rule 12. Implementation.

Social Media. All members authorized to post on behalf of the NJLP on official party social media accounts shall affix their initials at the end of the post.

**Rationale:** In the realm of social media, many brands have adopted attaching initials to their social content. This ensures accountability; by knowing who specifically authored or posted content, it streamlines any internal discussions should issues arise regarding particular content. It also introduces an element of personalization. Given that political parties are often seen as distant or bureaucratic, this approach helps the NJLP appear more relatable. When followers see those initials, they may feel a closer connection, as if they are interacting with an individual representative of the NJLP rather than an impersonal organization. Moreover, since there are multiple voices contributing to the NJLP's Twitter feed, these initials celebrate the diversity of those voices, allowing for a richer, multifaceted representation of libertarian views and stances. Above all, it underscores the NJLP's commitment to transparency, ensuring that followers are aware of the different individuals working behind the scenes.

### Proposal 3

A. Insert in Business Rules "12. Implementation." New subclause "A. Candidate Nomination and Support."

B. Insert in BusRule 12.A

"Criteria that should be considered when evaluating applications for campaign funding should be length of time with the Party, prior activity within the Party, past performance as a candidate, and structure of the current race (number and party affiliations of opponents and expected closeness of the race). Additional criteria may be considered as the funding body deems advisable."

**Rationale:** Let's start codifying what should be factors affecting levels of candidate support. If adopted by members we may anticipate further revisions soon reflecting our experience with candidates. This and previous years we've had sets of candidates, rather than just a few. In June all the funding went (Nathan's proposal) to a single campaign of a newbie member. He paid a membership fee of \$20 and received \$2.5K in funding a month later. In July Board acted hastily on a proposal (Jay's proposal) to split funding equally. On the other hand, some former members proposed barring nominations of freshmen members as candidates. Tiering candidate support seems a more balanced solution.

#### **Proposal 4**

Insert in BusRule 12.A.

"No candidate funding in excess of \$100 shall be released without a signed written agreement."

**Rationale:** That would improve clarity for both the candidates and the Party regarding the funding arrangements. This year funding was released without written agreements and produced lack of clarity on what is grants, what is loans, and what is to be expected; and a lot of consternation.

The concerns over bylaws or procedure would be first ruled upon by the presiding chair. Our chairs may or may not be well-versed in bylaws and RONR. If there are disputes, they would be brought up to the NJLP bylaws committee for adjudication. If there are remaining concerns, they can be further appealed at the next General Meeting.

#### **Member Bylaws Proposal**

Bylaws Proposal. By Mark Kapengut.

Proposal 6. Define Active level of campaigning.

Amend BusRule 2. Purpose.

1. [Insert "Active", and increase count, so it reads:] "The NJLP welcomes candidates of all 3 4

levels of commitment – Trademark, Active, Impact, and Challenge – defined as follows:"

2. [Insert a sentence after "Trademark:"] "Active: " [Prop 6A would insert here.]

3. [In "purpose" section, Insert after Trademark:] "Active: To develop "our" issues for

disenfranchised voters to record their disaffection with the status quo. Useful to foster

individual candidate development, and promote county party activism and develop local contacts and issues. Help voters and growthe Party. " [Bulk of this is just moved from the current Impact tier.]

4. [Amend after Impact:] "Impact: Procure a "wedge" of votes (goal of 3% or more) to shake up

the Demopublican establishment and to affect policy choices by legacies. and to develop "our"

issues for disenfranchised voters to record their disaffection with the status quo. Also useful to

foster individual candidate development, and promote county party activism and develop local

contacts and issues. " [Deleted sentence is moved to Active]

Rationale. We need to define a tier of candidate effort more than paper, and less than impact,

because that's how most of our candidates are actually running – neither Trademark nor Impact.

The reason for two "Active" mentions, in that BusRule 2 enumerates them twice: first defines the

tiers, and then lists their purpose. The reason part of the "Impact" is shifted into Active because

promotion and candidate development can be done at the Active level of campaigning, while

"wedging" is only at Impact.

Better defining this "Active" tier of campaigning would help manage candidate expectations.

Candidates and members may be confused by conflating Active and Impact style-campaigning. It's

simply impossible for most of our "active" candidates to run at Impact level. This is a feature of the

district, and the overall race, and the likely margin between legacies. On the other hand, semi-active

candidates now don't know what to expect. This mismatch of expectations feeds into tensions and

problems.

Proposal 6A.

[This proposal should only be considered if Proposal 6 is adopted.]

Amend BusRule 2. Insert after "Active:"

"Candidate is expected to do at least some of the following: maintain a website and/or social

media presence, raise funding and/or commit own, spend money and effort trying to attract

attention, reach out to voters, recruit campaign team and new members, conduct events and otherwise help voters and the Party.”

Rationale. The Proposal 6 would redefine our campaign tiering from 3 tiers to 4, to better differentiate

between Active and Impact. Proposal 6A would go further and define more specific activities to better guide candidates.

## Member Submitted Content

### Call for Candidates 2024

*By Mark Kapengut*

Let me preface with a call for candidates for 2024. Guys, we need 12 (or

more – read on) congressional candidates in 2024 to cover the state. And one for the US Senate. If

you’ve never run for office, raise your hand and give it a try. Being a paper candidate doesn’t take

much beyond the paperwork and collecting signatures. It would be much better to have candidates

stepping up from among ourselves, that through external recruitment. If there is even 10% chance that

you may think about doing it, please reach out directly, or come to the General Meeting, and let’s talk.

And if you already have campaign experience as a candidates, why not give it a try and run for US

Senate. Let’s have competitive internal primaries, with runners-up going after Congress. You may have

heard that Menendez received some gifts (any fans of gold bullion around here!?). By doing so, he also

gave a gift – to us, and to NJ voters. This is the best environment to run for US Senate in NJ as a

Libertarian in a generation.

Baseline. Just like the United States, New Jersey has red, blue, and purple localities and electoral

districts. Swing districts may have very close elections, with 1-3% margins between the legacy parties.

Recall NJ Gov election between Murphy and Ciattarelli in 2021, or CD-7 between Kean and

Malinowski. Running as Libertarians in the purple areas at what we call Impact level campaigning

purports to exceed the margin between the majors. So, here are a couple nuances that came up lately.

Last year we’ve run almost a full slate of Congressional candidates without a statewide race. This

established a baseline: most likely outcome for Libertarian candidates in NJ is about 0.7-0.8%. About half of these votes can estimated to come from registered Libertarians, and another from disaffected

Republicans and independents. So if you’re running a trademark or low-activity campaign in a deep blue or a deep red area, you can expect this result.

Some accused our candidates of being “spoilers”, and voting for the Libs – a wasted vote. In a single

party district, a simple comeback is that outcome of such an election is pre-fixed due to duopoly

machinery, and an individual vote for either of the major – simply doesn’t count. As an example, it

doesn’t matter who you voted for President in New Jersey in 2020, if you picked Rep or Dem. Jersey is

a deep blue state lately on a National level. It will vote for Dem regardless; and the only situation when

Jersey is in play would be if the Reps would have a landslide nationwide, so that vote still wouldn’t

matter. Thus in such situation, if a voter has a slightest affinity for Libertarian positions, it’s better to

vote for us – to express their preferences. Such voting has signaling, expressive and performative value.

Voters are free to do so, without strategic voting consideration.

Swinging. In swing districts, voter’s calculus is different. Their votes are no longer just wasted if used

for the legacy parties. So strategic voting kicks in, whereas voters who may be inclined to vote for us

would go to their second choice, lest that party loses. Nowadays more often our voters would second-

choose Reps. Ranked choice voting is a remedy for this. (Join NJLP alt-voting committee to learn more

or to advance these concepts.) But, the Republicans are blocking RCV from becoming the law of the

land. So that they can benefit from keeping our voters while ignoring our priorities. Then, they turn

around and blame Libertarian voters and candidates for daring not to be stuck with them. What a

chutzpah!..

There is some signal evidence that this plays a role. Last season, a couple of our candidates who were running in a bit competitive districts with a margin less than 10%, dropped about 0.2 from the baseline.

While the n is low, I read it as a third of our voters have taken a strategic choice and defected from our candidates. Gregg Mele, who was running for Gov in 2021 as a Lib in a very tight race, lost more than a half. I'm inclined to attribute some of that loss to this phenomenon of defecting Lib voters.

Impact campaign. So, if you're running in a swing district, you'll have to fight for every vote. If you hold on to your voters and approach the margin between the majors, that's an Impact campaign. This is

a very different environment. You'll likely get mostly those voters to are truly fed up with the duopoly.

In terms of votes received you'll get fewer for your buck. But, as a tradeoff your campaign may suddenly matter the way you wouldn't in a legacy party stronghold. You may get press coverage. And become an object for dirty campaigning by opponents of your opponents.

Your policy positions may be seriously discussed. Legacies may shift their posture to go after our voters. In 2020 around the Labor Day, being on the Jorgensen campaign, I've noticed that the influx of campaign supporters and volunteers suddenly slowed. We traced it to Trump describing himself as almost libertarian, and leaning a bit more on anti-war themes. Our campaign lost, but our voters have gained; Jorgensen was making an impact. Republicans may try to cast you a spoiler. But rather, you're a kingmaker. That's what Chase Oliver did in GA in 2022, getting on the debate stage and forcing a runoff in one of the most closely watched races in the nation. He was called the most consequential Libertarian of 2022.

In swing districts with Impact campaign, our voters who still may be just under 1% or just over, form a disproportionately large share of voters who are not committed to either legacy party. They are the true swing voters. You are helping them actually choose a winner. They matter, and so do you as a candidate.

NJLP bylaws define Impact campaigning, but fail to clarify that kind of difference. That came to bite

this year. To make that difference just a bit clearer, I've submitted a proposal to define a non-Impact Active campaign tier (read it nearby), to help the candidates choose. For some, these kind of consideration may affect which district to run in, given a choice.

Defections. Unfortunately, we have limited resources to run real impact-style campaigns in swing districts. Hope, it may changes. Lately there were a couple incidents with our candidates. Last year, Joe Biasco chose to suspend his campaign and endorse his Republican opponent. They've traded barbs all the summer, and as got a little bit of traction, he became concerned that he's stealing too many of voters

from Rep. So, there. He still got above average voting share, among our candidates, and the margin between Rep and Dem was 10 times larger.

This year a similar situation developed in LD2. NJLP candidate Shawn Peck got some traction, and a dark money outlet possibly linked with Dems dropped upwards of \$20K to support him via mailers and TV ads. (See James' statement on behalf of the Party nearby.) One way to interpret these situations, is that candidates who may be ok with running Active or hoping to win, may suddenly be getting cold feet while in the Impact zone. Another, is that that may be happening too soon, when your second choices are in no real danger. Steel yourself and enjoy the ride. While many of us were less than amused with some of the stances and developments in LD2, and that may be an understatement, Shawn will likely outperform the expectations it terms of voters and earned media. (As of this writing I don't yet know the outcome; we will soon. It's tantalizing.) I would view most of these situations as growth pains.

Another problem situation was last year, and is harder to handle. Clayton Pajunas, who was a newbie and signed up to run for CD7, failed to collect enough valid petition signatures, refusing help with petitioning and making alleged gross mistakes like no other newbie, and spectacularly failed the petition challenges by the Reps. Such legacy challenges to our petitions are much more likely in swing

districts. Now, we don't really know if Clayton threw the fight on purpose or by extreme negligence

and arrogance, His counterpart on the left running as independent, withdrew too just before the deadline, likely at the behest of Dems. Let's just assume that a Clayton-2 does indeed intend to get Lib nomination but purports upfront or just later decides to fail or throw the race to benefit Reps. There is no easy way for us to recover from such situations. There would no longer be a Lib candidate on the ballot, what can you do?! And despite some suggestions, floated around, no amount of vetting we can

realistically do, can solve these problems of candidate's future ill intent or changed mind.

Going multi-candidate. So, here is one such proposal for your consideration. In 2022 we've tried a full slate of congressional candidates. We even had a primary of sorts in one of the districts. To do one better, I hoped to have more of competitive primaries in some of the CDs in 2024. But, for the swing districts, let's do one better. Let's file multiple paper candidates under the same brand "Libertarian Party". We will give our voters more choices. And in case one of them defects, our voters will still have a Lib on the ballot.

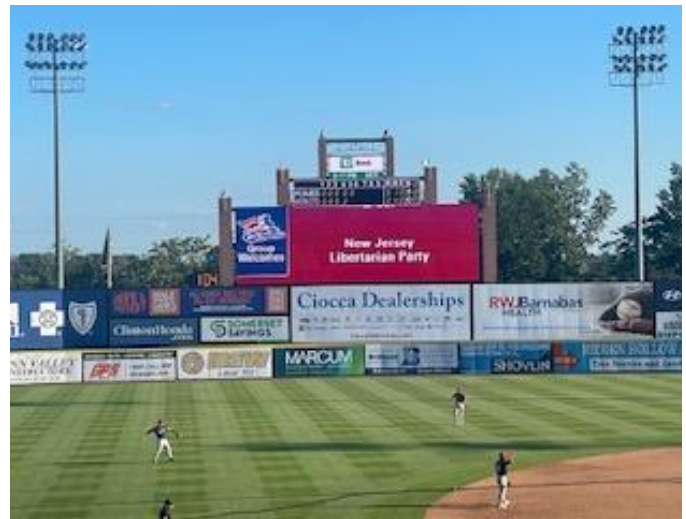
After all, let's face it, our candidates are not likely to win individually in a competitive congressional race this year. There is no danger of splitting each other's votes. We only care about the total votes our candidates get. For us, it would be a sort of primary, but at the General election in November. More candidates in a race would amplify our voice. And if there is an element of competition between them, even better. Remember, technically all of them are running as independents, as far as the state is concerned.

And while we are at it, how about if we put multiple Libertarian candidates for President in 2024 on the

NJ ballot as well!?... ♦

## NJLP Summer Picnic

*Submitted by Matthew Amitrano*



Somerset Patriots Welcome NJLP at our Summer Picnic this past August.

## Bits and Pieces, Jokes and Quotes

*by Fred Stein*

Two mice walk into a bar. The first mouse says to the second mouse "Did you get the covid booster shot?" the second mouse answers " NO they have not finished testing them on humans.

It's so cold in Washington, that politicians have their hands in their own pockets.

I asked the governor what he will do about unemployment. He said " what unemployment, all my friends have jobs."

If God wanted us to vote he would give us candidates.  
quotes by Mae West Too much of anything is.....WONDERFUL

If I have to choose between 2 evils , I will pick the evil I haven't tried.

Mark Twain jokes: Suppose you are an idiot.: Suppose you are a member of Congress. But I repeat myself. God created war so that americans could learn

geography. ♦

## Book Reviews

by Nathan Cole, *VP of Political Affairs*

Book Review: The Aristillus Series Powers of the Earth (2018) and Causes of Separation (2019) are two science fiction novels that each won the Prometheus Award for Libertarian Science Fiction in the years they were written. The author is New Hampshire legislator Travis J.I. Corcoran, an Anarcho-Capitalist and participant in the Free State Project.

Pitched as, “Atlas Shrugged on the Moon,” the two Aristillus books tell the story of an Earth in 2064 that has not been stopped from its current trajectory, its economy grinding to a halt, its technology forcibly suppressed under the Bureau of Sustainable Research due to fears of singularity. Elites of Earth have found an escape using a “anti-gravity drive,” allowing them to flee to the nearside Lunar creator of Aristillus. And in devastation of an ancient meteorite a truly free society to grow separate from a world with its hand out. With its many schemes devastating its prosperity its peoples, and California devastated by an earthquake, the Washington, DC-based government will attempt to raid the colony for tens of trillions of dollars to keep the government funded for another six months- just far enough to get past the next presidential election.

The works are satirical in their attacks of Washington in the same way the Babylon Bee makes of commentary on current day issues, but often inadvertently predicts events that happen. We see the US working with the UN in order to impose its empire on the world in more explicit terms than before. CEOs scapegoated for the failure of governments to bring about an economy that is either growing or equal, let alone both.

It is less the speculative fiction elements than the sci-fi elements that give the universe its appeal. Mostly hard science has a couple of deviations: the anti-gravity drive that makes travel to the moon possible without government permission, sentient genetically modified dogs that the Earth governments created and now seek to genocide, and Gamma, a sentient computer of immense power. Through these universe building-blocks, principles of how an anarchistic society might work are discussed, as well as solving its greatest problem: external invasion. Overall, the image of humans of all types escaping Earth gravity to found a world free of taxation and all the tyrannies it funds is overall hopeful. I recommend the story to all libertarians who are science fiction fans.

Book Review: The Virtual of Selfishness by Ayn Rand and others

The Enlightenment Era preceded a revolution in the human condition. The idea that reason could be used to determine the nature of reality led to an explosion of scientific knowledge and technological advancement. Useful in understanding elements of reality, it fails to tell humanity what its sum will be. In a collection of essays compiled by Ayn Rand; she and her colleagues describe her system, called ‘Objectivism,’ which is an attempt to develop a larger philosophical framework to determine what a human’s goals should be and how human it is to live together. The solution is to consider each human as an end to themselves, so that valuation does not become something to rule over the human, but rather a tool to improve his life.

In an era where risible political ideas arise and are accepted without question, Ayn Rand points out the underlying rot that has allowed it to become so: compromise. By compromising on principles, a tiny tax on those making over a million dollars becomes a forty percent tax on every dollar over a hundred thousand.

This collection of all should be read by all libertarians interested in philosophy, even if some of the premises are disagreed with. Being a minarchist, she tries to rule out the idea of competing government services, by using a scenario with two customers in a world with only two providers, and no need for any company to maintain a reputation which makes the free market as effective in other areas as it is. Another sort of issue that is endemic to her reasoning is the belief in objectivity, which is the target of the current siege on civilization. Objectivity is stated by the writings to be essential to the formation of a minarchist government. What is left out is the idea that objectivity can only be approximated when all sides involved agree on definitions and are not constantly attempting to subvert the dictionary, as we see with current woke activists of our time in a

fashion too brazen to consider grassroots. ♦

## Abuse of Power via Zoning Ordinances

by Tara Murphy

In 2020, after months of COVID lockdowns, Governor Murphy issued executive orders to allow businesses to reopen. They included guidelines such as allowing restaurants to utilize outdoor dining in order to spread customers out and reduce the risk of covid spreading.



As we saw diners and restaurants try to do this in parking lots, the disease continued to spread. This was a temporary measure meant to keep these businesses afloat until COVID cases decreased and they could safely resume 100% indoor capacity. Some towns quietly passed ordinances to turn this into a permanent privilege with add-ons for businesses such as zoning changes to allow amplified sound where it was previously prohibited. While bars and restaurants profit, residents have to suffer through hours of nuisance that were supposed to be prohibited and were prohibited prior to this adoption. This is an abuse of power. Businesses have used this as a back-door way to expanding their business.

While I'm not a fan of executive orders, EO 150 was careful enough to include wording in item #12 "No municipality, county, or any other agency or political subdivision of this State shall enact or enforce any order, rule, regulation, ordinance, or resolution which will or might in any way conflict with any of the provisions of Executive Order No. 150 (2020), or which will or might in any way interfere with or impede its achievement." and "Ensure all areas designated for food and/or beverage consumption are in conformance with applicable local, State, and Federal regulations;". This order was not intended to interfere with existing local ordinances and regulations.

Residents living near businesses that are taking advantage of this are now treated to outdoor concerts they never heard before. This may even conflict with a town's master plan that has language "as providing a balance of commercial land uses while reducing conflicts with residential uses." Business expansions via ordinance positions them to crush the rights of individuals, not to mention an unfair marketplace advantage. Ordinances that invalidate other ordinances and underlying zoning are troubling.

I've heard this is happening in shore towns such as Point Pleasant. If you know any examples, please contact me for more details. Is this an ethical violation? I've asked for the repeal of this ordinance in my own town and was given a hostile "it's not gonna happen". If more towns are experiencing this abuse of power, let's bring attention to it.

To contact Tara Murphy please her at:  
[taravmurphy@gmail.com](mailto:taravmurphy@gmail.com) ♦

### **Libertarian Autobiographies: Moving toward Freedom in Today's World**

*Submitted by Jo Ann Cavallo*

Libertarian Autobiographies, edited by Jo Ann Cavallo and Walter Block, delves into the trials, tribulations, intellectual formation, and accomplishments of 80 libertarians from around the world – in their own words. The following is an amended excerpt from the introduction written by the co-editors:

It is our fervent belief that libertarianism is the last best hope for humankind with regard to economics, liberty, justice, prosperity, peace, and thus even survival (pardon us for hyper-ventilating, but we maintain this is indeed the case). This belief of ours is predicated upon the crucial importance of the non-aggression principle (NAP): proper law should allow all people to engage in whichever acts they prefer, with the one exception being any behavior that violates this precept or any threat thereof. Thus, murder, rape, theft, kidnapping, fraud, and similar evil actions should be prohibited, and virtually everything else should be legally permitted.

But why assemble a collection of autobiographies penned by libertarians? Why not, instead, offer a collection of scholarly articles demonstrating the benefits of liberty? Many of the contributors to this volume have published just that sort of work on numerous occasions. Why not do so one more time? Although people may gain an understanding of this philosophy via rational argument, it cannot be denied that autobiographies, too, are important for the promotion of liberty. The personal touch may reach some people not approachable via any other means. Additionally, we all want to know the libertarian stories of people such as those who appear on these pages. Indeed, we find that libertarians have the most interesting stories to share because they often embrace this philosophy as the result of intense encounters with foundational texts or life-changing experiences.

One of the big "problems" we have with some of the best-known libertarians throughout history—such as John Locke, Lord Acton, Ludwig von Mises, Isabel Paterson, Henry Hazlitt, Friedrich Hayek, and Murray Rothbard—is that they never wrote an autobiography. Of course, if they had, alternative costs being what they are, they would likely not have been able to write other precious publications of theirs. But what about libertarians alive today? Would they be willing to share their stories? We already have the example of two volumes of libertarian autobiographies: *Why Liberty: Personal Journeys Toward Peace & Freedom* (Cobden Press), with 54 autobiographies edited by Marc Guttman, and *I Chose Liberty: Autobiographies of Contemporary Libertarians* (Mises Institute), with 82 autobiographies edited by one of the co-editors of



this present volume, Walter Block (available as a free pdf at <https://mises.org/library/i-chose-liberty-autobiographies-contemporary-libertarians>). Both volumes were published over a decade ago, however, in 2010. We wanted to learn more about the lives of contemporary libertarians not covered in these two volumes and of others who have emerged since the time of these publications.

We therefore reached out to a number of influential scholars, activists, professors, journalists, and cultural icons who have worked toward a freer society across the globe, inviting them to write a brief autobiography for this collection. We asked them to articulate, for example, what their lives and thoughts were before they embraced libertarianism; which people, texts, or events most influenced their intellectual formation; what experiences, challenges, tribulations, and achievements they have had as participants or leaders in this movement; and how this philosophy has affected their personal or professional lives.

A volume of autobiographies on the part of libertarians immediately raises the question of precisely what constitutes this political economic philosophy. In our “big-tent” view, it comprises several strands. They all have something in common, such as an appreciation for individual liberty, private property rights, the rule of law, and free enterprise, but there are also discernible differences. That is why if you get ten libertarians in a room and ask them a question, you’ll likely get eleven (or more!) different responses. In this volume, we invited libertarians across the political-philosophical spectrum, including (1) anarcho-capitalism; (2) minimal government libertarianism, or minarchism; (3) constitutionalism; (4) classical liberalism; (5) thick libertarianism. The contributors to this volume range over the five main viewpoints mentioned above, and also fill in the gaps between them. Their essays express different perspectives on many issues even while articulating the same core principles. In fact, it is our desire that their very differences of opinion on some matters will invite readers to think for themselves. What we have sought to present is a sampling of the myriad individual journeys toward libertarianism, however defined.

Although the majority of contributors to the volume live in the United States, we are grateful to the libertarians from around the world who accepted our invitation to share their stories. This volume thus includes voices from Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, England, Germany, Guatemala, India,

Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and Ukraine.

It is the hope and expectation of the editors that by bringing together a range of contemporary voices from outside the dominant left–right paradigm, this volume will contribute to the viewpoint diversity that is crucially needed in today’s public discourse. Moreover, these personal and intellectual journeys not only offer compelling insights into their individual authors and the state of the world in our lifetime, but may also serve as an inspiration for the next generation who will feel called upon to make our society a freer one.

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N.B. The publisher’s link to the book is: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-29608-6>. Both the hardcover and the ebook are available for purchase internationally. Get 20% off the printed book or eBook by entering the following coupon code at checkout on [link.springer.com](https://link.springer.com): H5DoMQW47RT2HD (valid until Oct 13, 2023).

In addition, the MyCopy version (printed ebook) is available at a low cost (\$39.99 in the US) to individuals who belong to a university subscribed to SpringerLink. If your university subscribes to SpringerLink, you can also read the book online for free. (If you’re not on a university-sponsored device, a VPN, or the school’s WiFi, you might have to access the book through your university’s library page.) ♦

### **October 3rd Press release from the Freedom From Religion Foundation**

*Submitted by Jim Tosone*

FFRF files suit against N.J. secretary of state over religious oath

The Freedom From Religion Foundation has filed a lawsuit on behalf of a N.J. resident against the secretary of state for forcing public office candidates to swear a mandatory religious oath. You can read the document here.

James Tosone, the plaintiff, has run for public office in New Jersey several times. Since 2022, Tosone has sought to run for office and has been unable to do so because the Division of Elections will not allow him to verify his candidate form via a secular affirmation in place of a religious oath. Due to his sincerely held convictions, Tosone has been unwilling to swear “so help me God,” since he is a nontheist.

The secretary of state and the state of New Jersey are coercing a statement of belief in a monotheistic deity by requiring nontheists or those worshiping more than one deity to swear “so help me God” in order to run for public office, FFRF asserts. Not only is Tosone, as a nontheist, barred from running for public office under this policy, as are New Jersey citizens who have no religious affiliation (24 percent of the New Jersey population) are also affected, among others. Additionally, the secretary of state and the state of New Jersey are coercing Christians who belong to sects that eschew swearing oaths to a deity, such as some Mennonites or Quakers, to violate both their religions and their consciences in order to run for public office.

The secretary of state’s official policy, as implemented through the Division of Elections, hinders candidates for public office who are unable to swear a religious oath. This policy violates the rights of the plaintiff and countless others under Article 6 of the U.S. Constitution, which bars religious tests for public office, as well as the First Amendment. FFRF contends in the complaint filed before the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey.

In late 2021, Tosone contacted the Division of Elections by phone and requested that he be allowed to strike out “so help me God” from the oath in order to complete the candidate petition. The Division of Elections responded that the Oath of Allegiance is dictated by statute and that a version of the oath without “so help me God” would not be accepted.

In early 2022, Tosone accessed the candidate petition from the Division of Elections’ website ahead of the 2022 filing deadlines and discovered that the 2022 petition once again contained the same requirement. FFRF sent a letter regarding the religious oath required by the candidate petition to the New Jersey attorney general on May 5, 2022:

Article 6 of the United States Constitution prohibits the government from requiring any kind of religious test for public office. ... The U.S. Supreme Court held that this requirement was a violation of both the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution. Likewise, requiring someone who is running for elected office in New Jersey to profess to a god in which they do not believe would make a mockery out of the oath and the solemn promise to support the Constitution.

In addition, the New Jersey Constitution mirrors the federal Constitution by prohibiting a religious test “as a qualification for any office or public trust.”

FFRF hasn’t received a response to this or several follow-up letters sent to the New Jersey secretary of state and Division of Elections.

“The secretary of state and the state of New Jersey have no valid reason or interest in requiring all citizens who wish to run for public office to take an oath that requires them to swear ‘so help me God,’” the suit asserts. “The state of New Jersey, the Division of Elections, and the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission have adequate means of ensuring the truthfulness of candidate information without requiring citizens to violate their conscience by swearing ‘so help me God.’”

The complaint requests a permanent injunction (a) prohibiting the secretary of State from requiring citizens running for public office to swear “so help me God,” and (b) ordering the secretary of state to provide candidate petition forms that permit the plaintiff to run for public office without swearing “so help me God.” The plaintiff is also requesting a declaratory judgment that the secretary of state has violated, and is continuing to violate, the U.S. Constitution by promulgating candidate petition forms that require all candidates to swear “so help me God” without the option of a secular affirmation. And the plaintiff requests an order awarding him the costs of this action, including reasonable attorneys’ fees and expenses.

“It’s an egregious violation of freedom of conscience — as well as our Constitution — to compel nontheists to take a religious oath,” says FFRF Co-President

Annie Laurie Gaylor. “This legal challenge seeks to put an end to this discriminatory and anachronistic practice.”

New Jersey Attorney Paul Grosswald filed the lawsuit, with FFRF attorneys Patrick Elliott and Samantha Lawrence acting as co-counsel. The case was filed in the Trenton Vicinage of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. ♦

## **How I Became A Libertarian**

*by Chris Russomanno, Representative South NJLP*

Imagine. You've worked hard your entire life. You are now 83. You do what you were told is your civic duty. You calculate, file and pay your property taxes. Several years and multiple failed attempts to notify you by mail later, a knock at your door informs you the county has seized your home, selling it at auction for \$24,500 due to a \$8.41 miscalculation. That is exactly what happened to Uri Rafaeli of Michigan. How I became a Libertarian.

I think it was way back between 2007 to 2012 when I became a libertarian. I'll use the small “l” for now. Because I had not as yet joined the party but my thoughts and outlook were becoming libertarian.

My father was, and is, a die-hard conservative Republican. So, not knowing any better, I was as well. I think one could have considered me a “Neo-conservative” or a “Neo-Con.” I believed in “America” and everything I thought it stood for.

In the public school I went to (I like to think of them as government run indoctrination centers) I had been taught about the Founding Fathers and the Revolutionary War and all the noble ideas that came with it. Most of the Presidents were lionized especially the ones that got us into wars. I was taught that World War Two was “the good war” and that we definitely, definitely, should have fought that one, for the good of everyone.

My father and mother went to public schools also and they learned the same things I did regarding our Presidents, foreign policy, and our government. My grandparents also went to public schools and while they were there, they were also taught pretty much the same thing that I was taught.

My parents and grandparents reinforced what I had been taught in school. The news, television shows and movies that I saw pretty much reinforced what I had been taught in school and what my parents told me.

So, can you blame me for being a Neo-Con? I believed in what I was taught so thoroughly that I believed it was all my idea to start with.

When I was nineteen I joined the Marine Corps where my idea of America policing the world and interfering in other countries politics was not only reinforced, it was put into overdrive. I believed that the United States of America, for the good of the world, should be the world's policeman. America should have bases all over the world and have the largest military ever.

I remember reading a book about Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller, one of, if not the, most famous Marine ever. A sergeant saw what I was reading and told me that if I liked reading I should read “War Is A Racket” written by another famous Marine — Smedley Butler. I asked him what it was about. He told me that Butler had realized that rich people used the Marine Corps to protect their interests (companies and corporations) in other countries (think United Fruit, sugar and coffee plantations in Latin America etc.) and that wealthy elites profited off of war.

I thought the guy was crazy, there must be some mistake. If Smedley Butler was a Marine, surely he must have gone crazy to loose faith in “America” and what we stood for. I knew some veterans felt that way after seeing horrible things in war, in combat. I thought that perhaps he had some kind of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or something like it. I was quick to dismiss this story. I didn't believe him at the time, but, you see, he planted a seed of curiosity.

There was one other distinct moment I remember. I feel so silly now when I think about it. When I was stationed in Okinawa Japan on Camp Hansen back in 1990 many of us would go out into the town of Kinville to eat, drink, and otherwise, be merry. At the many bars and clubs in town, there were what we called “Drinky Girls” who worked at the establishment. I always like to think of drinky girls as the poor man's geisha. These girls were provided as “company” for lonely GI's. You would buy them a “drink” for about ten dollars and they would then sit with you for about seven to ten minutes, or as long as it took them to smoke a cigarette. Most of these girls were from the Philippines.

I had a buddy who dated one of these ladies. He told me that she didn't like the Japanese. She also didn't like Americans. She didn't like them for the same reason, they had both invaded her country, killed people and committed atrocities.

I could understand her not liking the Japanese. After all, hadn't they started WWII by bombing Pearl Harbor? Weren't they an empire that went around taking over countries forcefully, killing the populace and taking their resources? But the United States of America? Surely she must be mistaken. We were the good guys. Why we sacrificed our own servicemen in several wars all for the sake of democracy, and freedom. We were the ones who won WWI and WWII single handedly only to help other countries who needed it.

I told him to tell his girlfriend that she better reread some of her history books and if she did she would know what really happened and that the the USA was a shining beacon of liberty to all the world and we were the good guys.

The fact that I was telling someone about their own culture and history still haunts me to this day. I can't believe how uninformed, naive and ignorant I was. But, please remember, I had only gone to government run public schools. What I learned there was reinforced by what I saw on television and movie screens. My father and mother, and my grandparents all went to public schools and watched the same thing I watched on television and movie screens.

What I didn't know was that the US had invaded the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. After we "liberated" them from the Spanish they wanted their independence. Instead of giving it to them, our government proceeded to slaughter and torture as many people in the Philippines as they could. They also put civilians in concentration camps and committed atrocities that would have made any tyrant or despot proud. I have to forgive my younger self. I just didn't know because I wasn't taught it. Neither were my older relatives or friends.

When I got out of the Marine Corps, I eventually became a police officer. Because most of us were taught in school that police officers are our friend and they are there to protect you. My parents were also taught this. It was reinforced by television shows and movies ... Are you starting to get the picture?

As I got older and started to have a few election cycles under my belt, I began to become disenchanted with the two party system. Those running for election, who were out to oust the incumbent, said they hated war and big government. They promised to end all our wars and foreign entanglements. They also promised to rein in government spending and make the government smaller.

The politician looking to get elected blamed all our woes on the party that was already in power and promised to make corrections and undo everything the incumbent had done. Finally a new president from a different political party would get elected.

Suddenly whatever wars they started were necessary wars, not like the unnecessary conflicts their predecessor had started. And now they found that they had to increase the size and scope of government which in turn increased government spending. They blamed all of our woes on the party that had been in power before them and claimed responsibility for anything that was going right in the country.

Eventually I caught on and began looking for something better, something different. And that's when I heard of Ron Paul. I did a little research and found that he had been in politics for a long time. He was consistent with what he said. He said the same thing in 2008 as he had for the previous twenty years. It was almost like he had, well, principles? The more I discovered about him and his ideas the more I liked him. So much so that I began to follow his campaign and read his books.

Then came the point of no return. Dr. Paul was at a debate with several Republican candidates including Rudi Guliani. Dr. Paul was talking about ending our foreign wars and bringing our troops home. He also said that many of our problems were "blowback" from our government interfering in the affairs of other countries. And then I remember people laughing at him.

The moderator did not stop them or try to bring order back to the debate. The other candidates, including Guliani, laughed at him and told him how wrong he was. Then they spouted some jingoistic bullshit about how great "Merica" was and the debate continued.

I also remember that in several of the other debates, they did not even mention that Ron Paul participated. There was one in particular where all the corporate media stations, including "fair and balanced—Fox News" reported who came in first, third and fourth in the debate. Ron Paul came in second and they failed to report that or even mention that he participated in the debate.

There is an adage that goes something like, "You only tear out a man's tongue if you are afraid of what he might say." What could be so dangerous about what Ron Paul was saying that he received almost a complete blackout from the corporate media? He was only talking about ending the wars, auditing the

Federal Reserve, and promoting freedom. What was so wrong with that?

At the time I was gradually becoming something other than a Neo-con. I began to research Libertarianism. The more I found out about it the more I liked it. I was probably a minarchist at this point. Yes I wanted smaller government but didn't we need a little government?

I had heard of anarchists before but I associated that word with people who wanted chaos and that also threw bombs back in the 1800's. As I kept reading books by Rothbard and listening to people like Tom Woods, I realized that there was another definition of anarchy that simply meant an absence of government.

Fast forward to 2018 where I had just arrived at the annual state convention for the New Jersey Libertarian Party. Someone I had never met approached me and we began to converse on libertarian thought and ideas. The conversation was moving along and everything was good until he said, "I am a Libertarian but I think we should still have public schools." I could feel myself getting angry and my left eyelid began to twitch. He then said, "And I also think that we should also have a strong foreign policy using our military to exert influence around the world."

I could feel Rothbard rolling over in his grave and the tic in my eye became more pronounced. I wanted to shout at him, "Are you sure you're a libertarian? Are you sure that you're at the right convention?! You sound more like a Neoconservative republican you idiot!"

Luckily for everyone Vermin Supreme arrived and started shouting something about giving away free ponies. I quickly walked away and sat down next to Arvin Vohra who was having a conversation about how cops were thieves and terrorists.

Some people are libertarians simply because they didn't want to be a Republican or a Democrat anymore. Some libertarians are minarchist, some are anarchists. At various points, I went through all of those phases in my libertarian journey. I should have understood that the guy I was talking to was on his own journey as well. Perhaps he had just joined the party and libertarian ideas were new to him. If I had started berating him for his beliefs, we could have lost a member that we really needed.

I should have remembered how I used to think and why. If he had been indoctrinated, sorry, I mean educated, in public schools, watched the same

television programs and movies that I had, then he was still stuck in that mindset, a lot of it wasn't really his fault. Some people find it hard to let go of old ideas and it may be a little scary for them when they find out they had been misinformed or dis-informed by people and institutions they thought they could trust. For some people, once they realized that they had been lied to for years, their whole world seems like it's collapsing.

So if you have been a Libertarian for awhile try to gently inform newcomers that much of what they have been led to believe is bullshit, and be nice about it. To newcomers who don't know much about our beautiful philosophy— you need to educate yourself. If you also went to public schools and watched corporate media, you have probably been misinformed / dis-informed. You need to read books, and listen to podcasts by great Libertarians. They will point you in the right direction.

I told you all that to tell you this. My fellow Libertarians, be nice and kind to everyone, especially each other. Be especially patient and understanding to new members of the party whether they are little "I" libertarian or big "L" Libertarian. Our party is too small for infighting. We can't afford to lose anyone. If you are mean to people, members or not, we may lose people we desperately need. Help them in their journey by explaining what we stand for and what Libertarianism is all about. If recent events in the party have got you upset, please don't go. We need you. Again, we are too small to have people leave the party. I would ask you to remember why you became a libertarian in the first place. If some of those reasons were that you were tired of corrupt politicians and the failure of the two party system, then those things haven't changed. ♦

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