

URGENT MEMO

Ballot access attacks in eight states!

New Hampshire -- Under Attack / California -- Under Attack / Illinois -- Under Attack
Alabama -- Under Attack / Maine -- Under Attack

May 18, 1995

Dear friends:

The Libertarian Party is under attack! Will you help us fight back?

Across the country, Republican and Democrat politicians are scrambling to . . .

- * Kick our "recognized" state parties off the ballot.
- * Triple or quadruple signature requirements.
- * Make it illegal to hire people to circulate petitions, or even to register voters.

They're trying to cheat millions of Americans out of the opportunity to vote Libertarian! We can't let them succeed.

Right now, ballot-access attacks are underway in eight states: Alabama, California, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, New Hampshire, and New Mexico.

And unless we act now to stop them, the attacks will spread to every state where the Libertarian Party dares to challenge the incumbent parties.

Why the sudden onslaught? I'll explain . . .

The Libertarian Party surged out of the 1994 elections, solidly on track for 50-state ballot status for 1996. One by one, we've been blasting through ballot-access barriers -- the roadblocks to election success.

So Republican and Democrats are quickly passing new laws to protect their monopoly on power. They're getting desperate -- and dangerous.

Here's the shameful story of their legislative shenanigans, state by state:

- * NEW HAMPSHIRE: HB-333 forces a political party to gain 1% of the registered voters (one of the highest requirements in the nation) within two years of earning "major party" status -- or get booted off the ballot.

Who's the target? The Libertarian Party, which lawfully earned major party status three elections in a row.

"[It's] an attempt to turn our state into a banana republic . . . " fumes NH State Chair Jeff Emery -- a ploy to "squash any political party with enough audacity to get on the ballot."

"This move has national implications," says NH campaign strategist Jim McClarin. "It's an effort to keep our party from gaining further national media attention in the first-in-the-nation primary, as happened with Andre Marrou's embarrassing victory in Dixville Notch last time."

The sneakiest part: It's part of a bill protecting NH's cherished first-in-the-nation presidential primary, making it virtually veto-proof.

* ILLINOIS: SB-34 passed the State Senate. It prohibits paying people to circulate ballot-access petitions on a per-signature basis.

The target: Third parties like the LP, who must collect 100% to 1,000% more petitions than their Republican or Democratic counterparts.

"Even with paid petitioners, it's difficult to gather the required signatures. If we can't hire people to help, it's all but impossible," says former State Chair Jeanette Clinkunbroomer.

* ILLINOIS: The attack continues. On February 28th, the governor signed SB-242, removing the office of University of Illinois Trustee from the ballot.

The target: The Libertarian Party, which gained major party status in Illinois by polling 5% for Trustee in 1994.

Isn't that typical? When we overcome one ridiculous ballot access barrier, they change the law to make it harder.

* CALIFORNIA: SB-418 and AB-1532 have been introduced. They both prohibit paying people to register voters.

The target: Third parties like the LP. "Since new parties almost always qualify in California by doing paid registration drives, these bills would make it more difficult to qualify," notes Richard Winger, editor of Ballot Access News.

Or stay qualified -- like the LP must.

* MAINE: LD-1091 would double all petition requirements for a third party to get on the ballot.

* ALABAMA: HB-66 has been passed by the House. It boosts the signature requirements from 1% to 5% of the last governor's race. That's a whopping increase of almost 50,000 signatures.

"[An] outrageous bill!" seethes Alabama LP Treasurer Bob Burns. "It's obvious the R's and D's want no competition." The bill was introduced and passed with no public notice.

The target: Third parties like the LP. "Alabama was one of nine states in 1994 which did not have a third party or independent candidate running for state office," notes Burns. "This bill would make it five times harder."

And the attacks go on and on . . . in Georgia, Idaho, and New Mexico

We can't let this happen! We can't let Republican and Democratic politicians destroy our hard-won ballot-access gains.

We need your help to:

1) Accelerate our lobbying efforts to fight these bills, and to lower ballot-access barriers.

* Thanks to our quick response, we have managed to squash bad bills last month in Arizona and Georgia. Working with activists from the Natural Law Party, we convinced the governors of those state to VETO unfair legislation.

* As America's third largest party, we're leading the fight to vigorously protect our election rights!

2) Use the courts to fight unfair ballot laws.

We need to be prepared to file lawsuits in state after state, as necessary. Every time the Republicans and Democrats pass a new law to keep us off the ballot . . .

. . . we must be ready to march them into court and fight for our basic Constitutional rights.

* Legal Action Committee Chair Joe Hauptmann is assembling a national team of Libertarian attorneys. "As the LP gains ground around the nation, the older parties are [placing] new obstacles in our way," he notes. This legal team will work to smash through those obstacles.

3) Get on the ballot before they change the law.

Remember that terrible bill in Alabama? Thanks to your support, we think we dodged that bullet.

On May 1st, we filed 23,000 signatures in Alabama. We completed the petition drive before the law changed, and we should qualify under the old rules.

Every state we finish strengthens our ballot-access armor!

* We've just completed petitioning in Maryland. Drives are underway in Nebraska, Alaska, and Oklahoma.

But the clock is ticking . . . We could also be petitioning in West Virginia, North

Dakota, and Florida right now.

The total price-tag for our planned 1995 ballot drives? Over \$250,000.

But we can't wait! Every day we delay gives unscrupulous politicians another chance to ambush us in the legislature.

Bad bills are moving through the system today. Some we might derail by lobbying. Some we may outwit by getting our petitions turned in. Some we might stop by threat of legal action.

If the onslaught of sinister legislation continues, we could easily be facing legal costs of \$20,000 -- or more.

We can't let our efforts stall because of a lack of cash. If we do, the Republicans and Democrats win.

Could I ask you for an emergency \$1,000 check today? That's a lot of money, and I apologize if it's too much to ask.

But how much is the right to vote for Libertarian candidates worth to you? Is it worth \$500? \$250? Even \$100 or \$50 or \$25 would give us precious resources to get on the ballot -- and stay there.

Thanks for your help. In return, we'll keep fighting, with every weapon we have, for your right to vote Libertarian.



William Redpath
LP Ballot Access Coordinator

PPS: Every day, these bad bills get closer to becoming law. Some are already on governors' desks. Some have been passed -- and the time for legal action is trickling away. Could you send an emergency contribution today?

"Changing the rules after 100 years just because the Libertarian Party has gotten on the ballot does not pass the smell test," says former LP gubernatorial candidate Miriam Luce about the despicable bill in New Hampshire.

She's right. What the Republicans and Democrats are doing stinks.

We're not going to stand for it. Help us build a legal "war-chest" to fight for our rights -- and to get on as many ballots as quickly as we can. Let's send a message to the Republicans and Democrats that their sleazy new laws won't keep us off the ballot!

Can we count on your help?



LIBERTARIAN PARTY

Libertarian National Committee, Inc.
1528 Pennsylvania Avenue SE
Washington DC 20003



PRIORITY
LP UNDER ATTACK

Republicans and Democrats
are trying to kick us
off the ballot in eight states!

PROPERTY

We can't let them kick
us off the ballot!

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Make checks payable to: Libertarian Party,
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Washington DC 20003

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the name, mailing address, and occupation and name
of employer for each individual whose contributions
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