



Liberty for All

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Did Illinois state employees illegally work to keep LP candidates off ballot? - *From July 2003 LP News*

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About a year after a high-ranking Republican officeholder in Illinois illegally used state workers to try to keep LP candidates off the ballot, a federal grand jury is investigating the incident.

According to a report in the Chicago Tribune, a federal grand jury is looking into charges that Illinois Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka used state employees to challenge a slate of Libertarian candidates before the 2002 election. The employees were on the state clock at the time.

Topinka, who was first elected state treasurer in 1994, is currently serving her third term in office. She also serves as the state chair of the Republican Party.

The investigation, which is being run by the U.S. attorney's office in Chicago, was reportedly triggered by an affidavit from Cathy Lynn Santos, a former contract employee who worked in the treasurer's office in 2002.

Santos, who helped found a grassroots political organization called Republican Young Professionals, said she went to work on June 28, 2002 and discovered that a majority of the treasurer's office staff was gone.

According to a copy of the affidavit obtained by the Illinois Leader, Santos said she was told the missing staff members were at the Illinois Board of Elections' office, reviewing petitions filed by LP gubernatorial candidate Cal Skinner and other Libertarian candidates. The state employees were looking for discrepancies or missing information on the petitions that would allow them to disqualify the petitions.

"Late that same afternoon, several employees that were absent all day came back to the Treasurer's office," wrote Santos. "I asked more than one individual where they had been. was told that specific employees had been directed by Nancy Kimme to go to the Board of Elections and assist with the petition challenge to get the Libertarian candidate off the ballot for the General Election."

At the time, Nancy Kimme was Topinka's campaign manager for her reelection campaign.

Because it is illegal in Illinois for state employees to engage in partisan political activity while being paid by taxpayers, Santos said she tried to warn the Republican Party about what she had seen. She was told to put her comments in writing.
(continued next page)

No More Stinkin' Taxes

As part of the revenue package to maintain state-spending levels, Governor Rod Blagojevich and the Democrat led General Assembly approved one tax increase that local governments in Illinois are saying "stinks". A brand new "fee" for wastewater treatment services was levied this spring that amount to as much as \$10 per person in some smaller cities. This tax increase has prompted a sewer

tax revolt that is gaining steam across the state.

Our new state sewer tax is slated to bring the state \$56 million dollars in increased revenue. Instead of cutting \$56 million from the \$54 billion general fund budget, this tax responsibility has been passed along to our cities.
(continued on page 3)

LP candidates off ballot? *(From page 1)*

On November 23, Santos submitted to the Republican Party's state central committee a "testimonial affidavit" detailing Topinka's illegal use of state workers. The committee ignored her signed statement, and later elected Topinka as state chair.

Illinois Libertarians -- who have charged that state employees illegally worked to keep LP candidates off the ballot in both 1998 and 2002 -- said they are not surprised at the new charges, only at the scope of the cover-up.

"Boy, if this is true, that evidence is horrendous for the entire Republican Party," said Illinois LP Executive Director Jeff Trigg. "To have the entire Republican state central committee possibly involved in covering up this information would make them a criminal enterprise the likes of which has never been seen in U.S. history.

"I'd say this is unbelievable, but I've learned better when it comes to the two old parties in Illinois."

In July 2002, Republican officials had filed a challenge against Skinner in a effort to kick him off the ballot. Even though the LP had filed over 52,000 signatures -- more than double the 25,000 required by law -- Republicans claimed that more than 28,000 of those signatures were invalid.

It was during this challenge that Topinka used state employees to check the validity of LP petitions.

Later that month, Republicans withdrew the challenge after it became obvious that the LP had filed more than enough valid signatures.

In August 2002, the Illinois LP filed a \$1 million class action lawsuit against then-Republican gubernatorial candidate Jim Ryan, the Illinois Republican Party, two local Republican officials, and "unknown co-conspirators." The lawsuit charged that the GOP had improperly tried to keep LP candidates off the ballot. The suit is still pending.

Five years earlier, in 1998, the Illinois Board of Elections invalidated 36,000 of the 61,000 signatures the LP had collected to qualify eight candidates for the ballot, and then used state employees to fight the LP's challenge to that ruling. As a result, LP gubernatorial candidate Jim Tobin was kept off the ballot.

According to a later Chicago Tribune article, state employees visited the Board of Elections' offices to monitor the 1998 petition challenge on more than 180 occasions, and at least 19 state employees worked on the taxpay-

ers' clock while engaged in partisan political activity.

Despite those newspaper revelations, no charges were filed against any state employees for those illegal activities.

The pattern of illegal behavior shows that Republicans are willing to repeatedly break the law to "oppress their political opposition," said Trigg.

"They just can't be trusted not to abuse their power, even when they've been caught before," he said. "It's bad enough we have to overcome their discriminatory ballot access laws, let alone having to deal with them using the citizen's tax money and state employees against us."

Based on the new evidence, Trigg said it is time for Topinka to resign.

"Since [Democratic Governor Rod] Blagojevich or any of the party hacks in Springfield don't have the guts to call for immediate resignations, we will. Judy Baar Topinka needs to resign immediately, along with the others under investigation."

The grand jury's investigation into allegations against Topinka isn't the only political scandal going on in Illinois.

In June, Republican Scott Fawell, campaign manager for the Friends of George Ryan campaign fund, was sentenced to more than six years in prison and fined \$750,000 for racketeering, mail fraud, and stealing state property.

Citizens for Ryan was also found guilty under federal racketeering statutes of using state employees to work on political campaigns. The charges involved illegal activity when Ryan served as Illinois secretary of state, before being elected governor in 1998. It was the first campaign committee in U.S. history convicted under the RICO statutes.

U.S. attorneys are also reportedly investigating former Illinois Republican Party state chair Lee Daniels, Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan (a Democrat), and Illinois Senate President Emil Jones (also a Democrat) for various illegal activities.

Ultimately, there is only one way to end the political corruption in Illinois, said Trigg.

"It just isn't going to happen until the voters wake up and start electing honest and ethical Libertarians," he said.

Contribute Online @ www.il.lp.org
Look to the left for the Contribute Graphic

Stinkin Taxes *(From page 1)*

This will force cities to cut their budgets elsewhere, as the Governor's office suggested, or to pass along these costs to their residents. Either way, most cities don't like the options.

An immediate backlash started with complaints that the Governor was just trying to pass the buck, instead of cutting his own budget further. These mayors and city councils were going to be blamed when they have to play the bad guy by increasing wastewater service rates to their residents. They hardly found this fair when it was the Governor's budget hole that was being filled at their expense. This sentiment from local politicians has been reported in newspapers all over Illinois the past two months.

City budgets had already been passed when this new tax was created that amounts to \$4.50 for every man, woman and child in Illinois. Mayors and city councils had no warning this increase was on the way and they couldn't add it during the middle of their budget cycle. On top of that, the bills were due August 1st, 2003 with the promise of fines for those cities that didn't pay up on time. This set the stage for the sewer tax revolt of 2003.

Several cities have decided to tell the Governor that they are flushing their bills right down to the sewers where they belong. Deer Creek, Illinois has refused to pay their \$5,000 bill. While \$5,000 doesn't seem like much, their population is just 605 people with only 227 households according to the 2000 census. That \$5,000 amounts to \$22.00 per household in Deer Creek, and the village council has decided to stand up to Governor. Naperville has also decided to boycott the state's sewer tax.

Town officials in Bloomington/Normal have noticed that the sewer taxes are not very uniform across the state. Bloomington/Normal claims their new tax amounts to \$1 per resident they serve. They noted that in Cook County the new tax equates to less than 10 cents per resident. It is obvious that smaller, downstate communities are carrying the heaviest load. Paxton, Illinois is another city not happy about the new sewer, and their \$20,000 bill means \$11.00 more from every household. That's still half of what Deer Creek is going to have to pay per household.

Several wastewater districts have already increased the bills to the residents they serve and we will see many more increases in the next year. One city got creative with their solution to paying this new tax. Hillsboro, Illinois has a bill for \$21,000 from the state they must pay.

Hillsboro also happens to be home of a state prison that benefits from their wastewater treatment plant. Using a better revolt method than throwing tea in the sea, Hillsboro decided to bill the state prison \$24,000 for their use of the city's wastewater treatment services and come out ahead.

The Southern Illinois Mayors Association gathered more than 100 elected officials from 40 communities in July to develop a game plan for fighting this new sewer tax. While they all agreed they didn't like the new wastewater tax, their proposed solutions didn't sit well with everyone. Marion Mayor Bob Butler and Carbondale Mayor Brad Cole promoted raising the state income tax by 33% to bring in more than \$3 billion to the state to replace the \$56 million the wastewater fees are generating. Others thought that replacing all the plumbing isn't needed when a simple plunger would do the trick. Governor Blagojevich promised he would not raise the income or sales tax during his campaign.

State Representative Bill Black (R-Danville) said that the amounts of these fees were only made known a couple hours before that vote was taken in the House. Black is one of 21 state representatives that have already signed on to a bill to repeal this tax and refund fees already paid. House Bill 3827 was filed on August 8th, 2003 and this is the synopsis:

Amends the Environmental Protection Act. Provides that the annual fees applicable to discharges under NPDES permits do not apply to (i) a unit of local government, (ii) a private sector contractor providing sewage treatment services or infrastructure under contract with the State, any department or agency of the State, a unit of local government, or a school district during the course of providing those services, or (iii) a not-for-profit organization. Requires the Environmental Protection Agency to refund the fees paid on or after July 1, 2003 by those persons or entities. Effective immediately.

20 House Republicans and one House Democrat so far, are willing to call a truce in the sewer tax revolt of 2003. This bill is going to need the support of more Republicans and many from the Democratic side of the aisle before it has a chance. There is still hope we can flush this wastewater tax down to the sewer where it belongs. Illinois residents don't need to pay no more stinkin' taxes.

- Jeff Trigg

A Fundamental Stand - Ken Prazak

I finally just had enough. The primary enforcement of the seat belt law was the last straw. If a person hasn't the right to choose what is safe for himself, or choose not to be safe, as long as encroaching on no one else's rights, then a person really has virtually no freedom left, this in the land of the meek and the home of the slaves. So I am drawing a line on this "law."

I really don't care to live as a slave because that is no life at all. And if I can't make a decision for myself on this most basic decision for safety, then there is little left in operating as a free human being, so I am fighting this ticket I received from an Algonquin cop to the death. If fined, I won't pay the fine. If jailed for not paying the fine, I will go on a hunger strike.

On October 7th, 1:30 PM at the McHenry County Government Center, room A160, I will present motions to dismiss and a motion for a trial by jury. The County wants a \$137.50 non-refundable fee for a jury trial, five and a half times the amount of the fine. The Illinois State case law says that jury fees must be reasonable. If this fee is reasonable, it gives whole new meaning to the term. The US case law is even stronger. A citizen can't be charged a fee in exercising a Constitutional right.

A judge in Washington state has already declared primary enforcement as unconstitutional. There seems to be a growing resentment against this law. I have received far more press than I ever anticipated; two stories in the *Daily Herald*, one in the *Elgin Courier* and one in the *Chicago Tribune*. *CLTV* also ran a story on my case.

A push to get primary enforcement passed came from the federal government by bribing the states to the tune of 500 million dollars. The feds want this passed to give law enforcement another excuse to pull people over in fighting the war on terror, which is really the war on freedom as our once great country marches on to the brave new world of big brother in an all-encompassing police state.

I think we can get this law repealed if pressure is put on the state legislature. Contact your representatives to repeal the primary enforcement legislation on seat belts.

The Death of the Soul

Ken Prazak

Living a life in self direction,

While respecting all others for the same,

Defines that life in all perfection,

Instills an integrity for ones name.

Without self choice, life is a loss,

Succumbed to the God- playing crowd,

A robot, a dummy, a cog in a machine,

Relinquishing the life spirit, proud.

Spiritless sensation, irresponsible play,

Replace the genuine call,

Soma injection, bread-and-circused displays,

Consumed in a tragic-death fall.

A seat-belt choice, may seem trivial to some,

A mundane ritual act,

But its core reveals the most basic stand,

Whose life is it, in fact?

For those so inclined to eschew that bondage,

Yet forced into a spiritual toll,

To click-it in coercion, with that routine act,

Becomes the Death of the Soul.

Letter From The Chair—Rhys Read

This is the best of times to be a part of the Libertarian Party of Illinois. We have never had so many party members elected to public office. We have never had so many members serving in public capacity. This year's April election saw five more Libertarians elected to public office. Especially in David Kelley's election to the school board of the second largest district in Illinois, we have never had Libertarians serving in as high a level of government. I am proud of the members who are serving the public, as they are the shining lights that will illuminate the way toward freedom in Illinois.

In the 2002 elections, we obtained established party status in one congressional district and six state representative districts, the most that this party has ever had. Petitioning for the next primary round starts in September, and we already have candidates gearing for the next election cycle.

We have stronger organizations in more counties now than we have ever had before. We are now organized in several official county or-

ganizations, with more beginning to be formed. It is these organizations that will be the backbone for the campaigns of 2004, and on into the future.

With more candidates running in the past few years, and with the successes we have achieved, there are now more experienced campaigners in the party than we have ever had. We can draw on this growing experience to avoid the mistakes of the past, and to bring our electoral success to new heights in the near future.

Not only is our party in the best shape, but all around our competition is at its lowest point in years. The minor parties that have competed with us in the past, such as the reform party, have fallen apart. They effectively no longer exist in Illinois. Even the Green party is able to run no more than one or two candidates statewide. In the 2002 elections, there were only three parties present on statewide ballots, the Democrats, the Republicans, and the Libertarians. I don't see that changing in 2004.

The power parties are also reeling. The scandal in the GOP continues to spread as more and more of its members are indicted and convicted. The current investigation focuses on my former opponent and counterpart, Judy Baar Topinka, who needed to use her employees on taxpayer time to beat me. The Democrats are trying to run the party for the benefit of the special interests who finance and own them. It will soon be obvious how much these policies will harm the citizen of the state.

I think the time has come when the citizens of Illinois will see that they should turn to a party based on principle, a party that has rational solutions to the problems facing our society. I see the citizens turning to a party that believes in freedom and the rights of the individual. I see us turning to a party that asks us to accept responsibility for our own actions. I see the time when we have Libertarians elected in partisan elections against the power parties. I ask your support, so that together we may make this vision a reality.

Illinois Libertarians blast 'big lie' budget crisis

(From September 2003 LP News)

The Illinois Libertarian Party and the Illinois Taxpayer Education Foundation (ITEF) joined forces to blast the state government for a "house-of-cards" budget.

Illinois LP Executive Director Jeff Trigg and ITEF President Jim Tobin conducted a joint news conference in the Peoria Public Library on July 9 to expose a \$4 billion increase in the state's off-budget expenditures and \$1 billion in tax hikes.

"Springfield is running a massive

shell game," charged Tobin. "Even as the state budget appears to be shrinking, spending has increased wildly. Hidden, off-budget spending has increased \$4 billion over the past year.

"To pay for these massive hidden spending hikes, Springfield is squeezing businesses and consumers with \$1 billion in tax hikes. High taxes are going to choke Illinois' economy and increase unemployment, unless Springfield exercises some restraint and common sense."

While the state budget technically fell from \$52.7 billion in Fiscal Year 2002 to \$52.6 billion in Fiscal Year 2003, the budget "doesn't touch the problem of off-budget spending," said Tobin.

The \$4 billion in off-budget spending paid for lottery winnings, social services, salaries, and pensions, said Tobin.

"Like con men tricking old ladies out of their pension checks, the Springfield tax-grabbers have been running a shell game," he said.
(continued next page)

'big lie' *(From page 5)*

According to the Illinois Comptroller, total state expenditures actually increased from about \$69 billion in 2002 to about \$74 billion in 2003.

Tobin also said the state government, despite its claims to be running a \$5 billion deficit, still has enough money for "pork projects."

For example, he noted, the budget includes \$7 million to restore the Lake Michigan shoreline in Chicago, \$30 million for the Argonne National Laboratory, and \$1 million to build a biomedical research facility at Northwestern University.

"Judging by their spending behav-

ior, I'd say not even the politicians in Springfield really believe there's a crisis," he said.

In addition to his role with the ITEF and the National Taxpayers United of Illinois (NTU), Tobin was the 2002 Libertarian candidate for Lt. Governor.

Trigg echoed Tobin's charges, noting that the state government was also raising fees to cover its growing off-budget expenses.

"Local governments all over Illinois are just now learning of fee increases that Governor [Rod] Blagojevich and the General Assembly are using to prop up their house-of-cards budget," he said.

"[Politicians] are effectively passing the buck to local governments to

take the blame for higher taxes, while taking credit for not having to raise state income or sales taxes."

New fees for solid waste management, water and sewer mains, and hazardous waste permits will cost towns and cities at least \$56 million a year, said Trigg. The fee hikes were approved by the General Assembly on June 20.

The press conference generated statewide media coverage, and attracted journalists from at least two TV channels, three radio stations, and two newspapers.

The Illinois Taxpayer Education Foundation is a non-profit organization that researches and publicizes taxation and government spending issues.

Will President Bush be on the 2004 Illinois Ballot? Perhaps Not, If The Libertarians Have Their Say

The Libertarian Party of Illinois held a media conference on Monday, May 19th in the State Capitol Press Room to respond to the Illinois State Board of Election's decision regarding the Republican nominees place on the 2004 Presidential ballot.

The Republican National Convention will not nominate their candidate for President until 7 days after the Illinois deadline for certifying candidates for the ballot according to Illinois statutes. [10 ILCS 5/7-60] The Republican National Committee (RNC) requested that the Illinois State Board of Elections (SBE) bend the law by "recertifying" on the 60th day to assure President Bush a place on the ballot. The SBE will decide at their upcoming meeting how they plan to change the rules for the RNC's request.

The Libertarian Party of Illinois believes the only solution is for the SBE to recommend that the Gen-

eral Assembly change the law. The SBE should not have the authority to arbitrarily change deadlines in the election laws to accommodate any candidate. Idaho, Utah, Virginia, and Indiana have already passed legislation to fix this problem and Alabama will shortly, according to Richard Winger of Ballot Access News.

Libertarians don't believe President Bush should be kept off the Illinois ballot because of a technicality any more than they believe their own candidates should suffer the same fate. But the fact is that Libertarian and other candidates have been taken off the ballot on technicalities and the Republican Party needs to abide by the same rule of law as everyone else. All these states shouldn't have to pass new laws just because it makes better marketing sense for the Republicans to hold their taxpayer funded National Convention closer to the election.

"This situation further illustrates how unfair Illinois elections have become", claims LPI Executive Director, Jeff Trigg. "Illinois election laws are already unequal as it is much easier for Republicans and Democrats to get on the ballot than it is for opposition candidates. Now they want to add insult to injury by obviously failing to meet their own rules and expecting those rules to be changed to accommodate them? Am I in America or Cuba?"

"You can be sure if the tables were turned and it was the Libertarians nominating their Presidential candidate 7 days after the deadline they wouldn't lift a finger to help us stay on the ballot. They won't even lift a finger to reduce our petition signature requirements that can be fifty times higher than theirs. There is obvious discrimination when it comes to ballot access in Illinois," accuses Trigg.

Why I Am a Libertarian

- Ron MacArtney

At the heart of liberalism and conservatism lies a fatal flaw. In order to further their ends, liberals and conservatives alike grant to government the right to regulate the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labor - and they do so with little or no regard for how much of the national income government takes from the people. By so doing, both foster diminished individual liberty - as laws are enacted and regulations created, and as taxes are levied to implement and enforce them.

Taxation diminishes liberty most egregiously when growth in the percentage of the national income consumed by government exceeds the growth of the national income. In 1902 government consumed eight percent of our national income**. In the year 2000 it consumed forty-seven percent**. If the growth in government spending continues to exceed the growth of national income in the present century as in the past, by the year 2100 it will inevitably consume close to one hundred percent. In that case, our freedom to use the fruits of our labor as we choose will be virtually gone - an intolerable end.

Since both liberals and conservatives decry government's propensity to take an ever-greater share of the national income over time - even as they approve greater government spending to further their respective ends - the continued application of either liberal or conservative philosophy is ultimately doomed to fail. There is no evidence at this time to suggest the contrary.

I therefore embrace the Libertarian political philosophy as embodied in the *Statement of Principles*, drafted by Dr. John Hospers, head of the Philosophy Department at the University of Southern California, in 1972. It has remained virtually unchanged to this day, and now reads:

We, the members of the Libertarian Party, challenge the cult of the omnipotent state and defend the rights of the individual.

We hold that all individuals have the right to exercise sole dominion over their own lives, and have the right to live in whatever manner they choose, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the right of others to live in whatever manner they choose.

Governments throughout history have regularly operated on the opposite principle, that the State has the right to dispose of the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labor. Even within the United States, all political parties other than our own grant to government the right to regulate the lives of individuals and seize the fruits of their labor without their consent.

We, on the contrary, deny the right of any government to do these things, and hold that where governments exist, they must not violate the rights of any individual: namely (1) the right to life - accordingly we support the prohibition of the initiation of physical force against others; (2) the right to liberty of speech and action - accordingly we oppose all attempts by government to abridge the freedom of speech and press, as well as government censorship in any form; and (3) the right to property - accordingly we oppose all government interference with private property, such as confiscation, nationalization, and eminent domain, and support the prohibition of robbery, trespass, fraud and misrepresentation.

Since governments, when instituted, must not violate individual rights, we oppose all interference by government in areas of voluntary and contractual relations among individuals. People should not be forced to sacrifice their lives and property for the benefit of others. They should be left free by government to deal with one another as free traders; and the resultant economic system, the only one compatible with the protection of individual rights, is the free market.

** Source: Statistical Abstracts of the United States.

Libertarian Media Snips

Libertarians critical of 'budget panic'

Appeared in the Peoria Journal Star on July 10, 2003 written By KRIS WERNOWSKY

Jeff Trigg on Wednesday criticized the state's recent implementation of wastewater fees, calling it a method to "prop up their house of cards."

"He's passing this on to local government so he can say he didn't raise the sales tax or income tax," Trigg said. "It's just piddly in the grand scheme of things."

Jim Tobin, president of the Chicago-based Illinois Taxpayer Education Foundation, questioned state lawmakers' recent budget panic, noting state revenue has actually increased. He gave recommendations for ways to help cure Illinois' fiscal woes.

Treasurer and comptroller face criticism for this year's \$2.2 billion state spending increase

Appeared at Illinois Leader (www.illinoisleader.com) on July 14, 2003

"Judy Baar Topinka is not only the State Treasurer that is supposed to be fiscally responsible, but she is the Chair of the Republican Party, which is supposed to support reducing the size of government," Rhys Read, now Chair of the Libertarian Party of Illinois. "She shouldn't be pouting about a small decrease in her budget; she should be calling for an even greater reduction and challenging the other officers to do the same," said Read. "That is what I would do."

With anti-smoking funds dwindling, advocates push ban

Appeared in the Daily Herald July 20, 2003 written by John Patterson - State Government Editor

Illinois Libertarian Party Executive Director Jeff Trigg said the latest events prove the state's cigarette policies are all about dollars, not public health. "They're not taxing cigarettes to get people to quit. They're taxing cigarettes because they're addicted to the taxes," Trigg said.

All In The Timing?

Appeared on the Chicago Tribune website September 15, 2003 written by Eric Zorn on his web log Breaking Views (www.chicagotribune.com)

Progressive political activist Dan Johnson-Weinberger, following up on concerns expressed earlier this year by the Libertarian Party of Illinois, notes today on his web site that Illinois "law requires political parties to certify their presidential nominees 67 days before a general election. The Republican convention is scheduled for September 3, 2004, only 61 days before the general election."

Surprised by Democrat Governor's veto

John Patterson at the Daily Herald wrote a story September 8, 2003 on Governor Blagojevich vetoing the lifting of some tax caps.

"I don't know how you could not be surprised," said former State Rep. Cal Skinner Jr., a Lakewood Republican who ran for governor last year as a Libertarian.

Skinner, an ardent supporter of tax caps, even penned an article for a conservative Web site that praised the governor's actions.

All the way to New Zealand

Appeared at Scoop.co.nz an internet news agency from New Zealand written by Rosalea Barker on June 9, 2003.

Last month the Libertarians in Illinois picked up a bit of media coverage when they pointed out that the Republicans will not be nominating their 2004 presidential candidate until seven days after the Illinois deadline for certifying candidates for the November ballot.

In the Libertarians' press release, the Illinois LP Executive Director Jeff Trigg said: "Libertarians don't believe President Bush should be kept off the Illinois ballot because of a technicality, any more than they believe their own candidates should suffer the same fate. But the fact is that Libertarian and other candidates have been taken off the ballot on technicalities - and the Republican Party needs to abide by the same rule of law as everyone else."

Thank Jim Edgar for U of I same sex benefits

- Jeff Trigg

Appeared as a letter to the editor at the Illinois Leader (www.illinoisleader.com)

Browsing around the Illinois Leader today, your article "*U of I notifies employees of same sex benefits*" reminded me why those who oppose this decision had little power to influence this policy. I'm not going to talk about whether or not offering insurance to same sex partners is the right thing for the U of I to do. Instead, I've got my own spin on the story.

The University of Illinois Board of Trustees is appointed by the Governor. That wasn't always the case as they used to be elected in statewide elections. I believe they would be more accountable for their actions if they still had to face re-election and the wrath of the voters. If decisions such as this were made that many people disagreed with, there would be a chance to run against those board members and replace them. As it stands now, the board members only have to please the Governor to retain their seat.

The U of I Board of Trustees was scolded earlier this year when an audit revealed some very frivolous spending habits. Private chartered flights were being arranged for them to travel around Illinois, among other expensive luxuries. Once again, if they were held accountable by the voters instead of only the Governor this wasteful spending may very well have been avoided.

Now we get to the reason why the U of I Board of Trustees is no longer elected and can get away with questionable policies and practices. Blame the Libertarians, or more accurately, the reaction by Jim Edgar and the Illinois GOP to the Libertarians.

In 1994 the Libertarian candidates for U of I Board of Trustees collected more than 5% of the vote for those offices. According to Illinois election laws, this made us an "established party" in Illinois and afforded us most of the privileges thereof. In 1996, we did not have to collect the 25,000 valid signatures to put our candidates for US Senate and President on the ballot and enjoyed the same rules as the two old parties. Like usual, the Republicans couldn't stand the thought of democratic competition and challenged our "established party" status in 1996, but we beat them in court since the laws they wrote were on our side.

Well, the Republicans just couldn't fathom letting the Libertarians get on the ballot using the same rules they have to follow, so Jim Edgar made a change. Jim Edgar made the U of I Board of Trustees an appointed position instead of an elected position so the Libertarians couldn't keep getting 5% in those elections to allow us to operate by the same ballot access rules as the two old parties in Illinois.

Would the U of I Board of Trustees have made this controversial decision to offer same sex benefits if they were facing re-election? Would they have used taxpayer money to buy private chartered flights for themselves if they were facing re-election?

It would be much easier to hold these trustees accountable if those that disagree with them can run to replace them or support candidates they agree with. Right now, the sole power to replace them sits with our Governor. Jim Edgar may have trusted himself to make the right decisions regarding the trustee appointments, but he also gave that power to future Governors including Democrats.

So while those who disagree with this recent decision are complaining, they have Jim Edgar to thank for their lack of recourse. The ONLY motivation to change the U of I Board of Trustees from elected to appointed was to oppress the Libertarians and make it harder for our candidates to get on the ballot and enjoy the free and equal elections promised by the Illinois Constitution. It looks like that lust for power by the Illinois Republicans has now come back to haunt them.

Around the State

LP Cook County is active in many areas including fighting the smoking ban in Skokie and participating in parades. Website: www.LPCook.org Contact: R. Scott Bludron, bludorn@attbi.com

LP Lake County continues taking on taxes and county fair outreach. Website: www.lake.il.lp.org Contact: Eric Dubiel, chair@lake.il.lp.org

LP DuPage County has elected precinct committeeman and want more. Website: www.dupagelibertarians.org Contact: David Hughes, dupagelibertarians@yahoo.com

Southern Illinois Libertarians worked the DuQuoin State Fair and are looking for candidates. Website: www.il.lp.org/affiliates/sil/ Contact: Jim Syler, calion@mac.com

LP McLean County is just getting started in Bloomington/Normal. Website: www.lpmcleancounty.org Contact: David Lee, lpmc@lpmcleancounty.org

LP Fox Valley doesn't like the new seat belt laws. Contact: Julie Fox, treasurer@il.lp.org

College Libertarians have formed the new **Students for Individual Liberty** at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Websites: www2.uiuc.edu/ro/liberty/ and www2.uiuc.edu/ro/sil/ Contact: David Warden, warden@uiuc.edu

Rockford Area Libertarians have gotten three members elected. Contact: liberty@lprockford.8m.com, (815)964-4012

LP Chicago could use you at their next meeting. Website: www.lpchicago.org Contact: lpc@djhonline.com, (312)409-2223

LP Will County has ballot access in on state rep. District. Website: www.willcountyp.org Contact: Eric Ferguson, feedback@willcountyp.org

Greater Peoria Area Libertarians would like to split in two for Tazewell and Peoria County. Can you help? Website: www.gpal.org Contact: info@gpal.org

Late Additions

Jerry Kohn, LPI Secretary and 2002 candidate for State Rep. has announced his interest in seeking the Libertarian nomination for US Senate in 2004. Jerry was endorsed by the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun-Times ahead of both his Republican and Democrat opponents. Jerry teaches political science at a public high school, and is an elected member of his local library board.

Look for great things from Jerry soon. Drop Jerry an email of support at secretary@il.lp.org

LPI Executive Director, Jeff Trigg, is forming the Free and Equal Elections Coalition, a multi-partisan organization, to effect change on the restrictive ballot access laws we face. With the Fall Veto Session about to begin in Springfield, we will need everyone's help contacting their respective representatives.

Stay tuned for more action from the Free and Equal Elections Coalition.

Article III, Section 3—Illinois Constitution
All elections shall be free and equal.