

Dam's Gotta Break

By Roy Minet (Rev. 10/08/14)

How much longer can the two old parties cling to their monopoly on political power in spite of crumbling support? I am pleased to observe that our country is moving fairly rapidly in a Libertarian direction, and that neither Democrats nor Republicans have sufficient support to justify their continuing hegemony. Here is some of the evidence:

- Polls consistently show that a solid and growing majority favors fiscal responsibility and social tolerance. That's libertarian.
- Increasing numbers of voters reject the two old parties and instead register either with other parties or as independent. According to Gallup, they have grown from 31% in 2004 to 47% in 2014, while Democrat registration has fallen to only 26% and Republican to 25%. Far more people feel they are not represented by either old party than support either one of them. If the trend continues, it will soon be the majority that is not represented.
- Job approvals for our last two Presidents are in the toilet, and for Congress, it's an incredibly low 13%. These are all Rs and Ds who, decade after decade, continue to ruin our country by spending way too much, increasing our debt to truly dangerous levels and involving us in unjustifiable military actions that sacrifice unbelievable amounts of blood and treasure.
- A new AP-GfK poll reveals that 75% of Americans doubt the federal government will address the country's important problems and only 28% think the nation is moving in the right direction.
- A rising tide is washing away the futile "war on drugs" which is still being unconstitutionally pursued by both old parties at a huge cost in dollars, ruined lives and violence. The Libertarian position has always been the same: individuals own themselves; individuals are responsible for themselves; individuals have the freedom to take care of themselves as they think best. No less than an amendment to the Constitution (the 18th) was necessary to grant the government the power to prohibit alcohol. What has conferred the power to prohibit drugs? Nothing.
- Another flourishing rebellion is wiping out the government's ability to force a definition of marriage upon us. Again, the Libertarian position has always been the same: the government does not and should not have that power. Individuals and groups of individuals (like churches) retain the liberty to define such social institutions however they see fit.

Even a small block of Libertarians in Congress would break some deadlocks and make a substantial improvement. Libertarians would mostly vote with the Democrats on bona fide social issues and with the Republicans to achieve fiscal responsibility, assuming Republicans are actually serious about that. According to polls, this is exactly what most Americans want.

So, how do D and R candidates keep getting elected with so little support? Indeed, nearly 90% of incumbents are re-elected.

The main reason is the “two-party system” that, not surprisingly, the two old parties claim is essential. There is no official or legal two-party system. The U.S. Constitution doesn’t even mention political parties. The two-party “system” really is just the two old parties colluding to perpetuate their tag-team power sharing. They rig things to keep competitors from being elected.

Many obstacles have been erected, some obvious, others more subtle. Here are just two gross examples. The Commission on Presidential Debates was formed by, and is exclusively run by Ds and Rs. This so-called “commission” is only a fig leaf to cover blatant exclusion of anyone but Ds and Rs from debates. Ballot access laws, especially in Pennsylvania, make it extremely difficult to get on the ballot if you’re not a D or an R. Pennsylvania Senate bill SB195, The Voters’ Choice Act, would level the ballot access playing field; no surprise that it’s being “safely” bottled up in committee by Senator Lloyd Smucker, (R) Lancaster.

Another reason is that the brain-dead plurality voting methodology we use strongly motivates people to vote for “the lesser of two evils,” making it hard for newcomers to gain a toehold. A ranked choice methodology would cure this and other plurality defects by counting your second choice if your first choice is eliminated. Instant Runoff Voting is the best known, but there are much better ranked choice methodologies than IRV.

Apathy/ignorance of the electorate is a third reason, but polls suggest that voters are waking up and wising up. With so much pressure building, the dam’s gotta break.

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