



The LibPENN

The Official Newsletter of the
Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania

The Libertarian Penn

October 2009

Upcoming

Events:

LPPA Board Meeting —

October 10th, 12 pm
Ted's - Dauphin County

LP County Meetings

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LPPA Convention —

Winter 2010, more information in next issue.

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Trivia question for this issue:

How many members are signed up on the LPPA Forum at www.lppa.org?

Answer on next pg.

A Not-So-Cheery Proposition

By Scott Lewis
LPPA member - Dauphin County

“Power tends to corrupt,” wrote Lord Acton in 1887, “and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” His words are as true now as they were then. In the wake of increased Congressional power to regulate tobacco, the Food and Drug Administration is poised to use its power in ever expanding ways. Now emboldened, the FDA seeks to expand regulation to...your breakfast cereal.

Yes, it is true. In a recent letter to General Mills, the company that makes Cheerios, the FDA told the company that advertising used to sell the popular cereal makes “unauthorized health claims” and therefore should be regulated as a drug. The letter further stated that due to these claims the cereal “may not be legally marketed with the above claims in the United States without an approved new drug application.” In the letter, the FDA threatened to expropriate profits, or the cereal itself, if the manufacturer did not take prompt action to comply.

General Mills defended their claims by pointing out that the wording in the advertising and on the boxes of cereal complies with the wording of the FDA. Additionally, General Mills cited a battery of clinical studies that outline the benefits of eating whole grains, including lowering cholesterol. Many of these studies were conducted, endorsed, or funded by the FDA.

Lest we begin to see such federal bullying as the exception, in April the Federal Trade Commission settled a complaint with the Kellogg Corporation involving claims that its Frosted Mini-Wheats cereal was shown in clinical trials to improve children's attentiveness. In a recent not-so-public statement, both the Federal Trade Commission and the FDA stated that they would be taking a much closer look at food claims in the future.

There are multiple issues here, such as whether regulations that apply to branded companies making health claims would apply to similar generic products not making such claims; or what health claims constitute common knowledge, and therefore would not require clinical trials. Yet, foundational to all of these issues is power.

Power is relational. That is, it relies on particular relationships between social entities. At the heart of these relationships are the assumptions that each entity relies on. These assumptions are key because they dictate the nature of the power dynamic between entities. When the assumptions are congruent, power structures can serve positive functions within social relationships, such as a reduction in conflict. When assumptions are not congruent, power relations can be strained. In such cases, those in power must use force or coercion to maintain dominance.

A general assumption that is maintained by those in power is that the powerful are in a better

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A Not-So-Cherry Proposition (Cont.)

position to assess the health claims of a product than the manufacturer of that product. There is also a latent assumption that the government knows what is in the health interest of the consumer better than the consumer.

Let's examine the first assumption. On the surface, it seems reasonable. After all, General Mills wants to sell its product, and to do so they might resort to making extraordinary claims. (Why not say Cheerios will give you a longer life span, or increase your sex drive?) But this quickly collapses when the second assumption is taken into consideration. Most of us can spot a fraud. Those of us who cannot quickly learn. Companies who act dishonestly typically do not stay in business long. To put it another way, companies have a vested interest in doing right by their customers, who vote with their dollars. After all, store shelves are overrun with choices of cereals. The benefit of this is that individuals can choose which cereal is best for them. They can individualize their choice, even based on limited or flawed information.

Juxtapose that with the assumption that the government knows best. Unlike a for profit company, government has little motivation to act in the interest of the people. Even if by some act of benevolence they were motivated to act in such a way, it is unclear that they could do so. People are not all the same. People are individuals, and though our desires and needs are often the same, they are often strongly distinct. Regulations—indeed power itself—cannot identify or account for these differences. Power must uniformly be applied to disparate needs. For this reason, regulations must necessarily blanket entire populations, without regard for individual differences or needs.

Even if we assume that those in power have given us complete and accurate information, the limitations on choices due to regulation belie the benefits. Couple this with the fact that individuals have no choice of regulators—we do not elect the FDA—and the assumption of power crumbles. That is why force and coercion are so often needed to maintain power. That is why the FDA found it necessary to threaten General Mills with loss of profit. That is why the federal government finds it necessary to maintain increasingly coercive tactics to justify their actions against businesses and individuals, and even entire states.

Lord Acton was right. Power does tend to inevitably corrupt because the assumptions of power are fundamentally incompatible with free choice and free thought. On the other hand, free thought and free choice are the greatest threats to power, and thus the surest targets.

Coming

Soon!!

The new

LPPA website.

Visit

www.lppa.org

to learn more



Trivia Answer:

**As of 9/21/09 there
were 277 members**

**signed up on the
LPPA forum**



**Hundreds gather for the
10th Amendment Rally at the
State Capitol**



**Young Libertarians in
Washington, DC for the 9/12dc
March and National Tea Party**

Health, Education & Welfare

By Vernon Etzel
LPPA Member, Venango county.
LP Candidate for Oil City Council At Large

The obligation of Libertarian government is to protect individual Rights to life and liberty. This implies more than simple “courts & military.” A blanket of economic and civil protection for individuals is also required. When the LP comes to this understanding, it will have the foundation for swift and effective growth on the national stage.

We all agree, and it is our core principle: that a government should not violate the very Rights it is entrusted to protect. This principle points both to the source of government funding, and to the method of disbursing these funds. A Libertarian government requires not only a reasonable source of revenue, but also an infrastructure by which these revenues are spent.

Libertarians can easily point to the failure of “socialism” in both theory and practice. For socialism argues that all means of production be put in the hands of the State. Socialism is the effective militarization of an otherwise civilian economy, and we are against that.

The lure of socialism, however, is born from genuine concerns, concerns that are simply dismissed by conservatism. But these concerns are real. They have empowered the massive growth of state power for generations.

These concerns over poverty, health care, and education aren’t “Left Wing” issues. They are common issues, felt by the vast majority of human beings in all countries. They are problems that need to be addressed, somehow, without the simple dismissal of the “Right.”

In effect, I believe that a Libertarian government has every right to implement, within its means, a system of direct assistance to all persons. I believe that a free market should provide basic human services such as health, education and welfare, and that a Libertarian government should directly assist individuals financially to access that market.

I am not arguing for a “libertarian welfare state” any more than a Randist, who believes that government should run Courts and Military, isn’t advocating “libertarian militarism” or a “libertarian police state.” The term “welfare state” implies a huge bureaucracy of housing authorities, government hospitals, and state schools. And the modern use of the term “welfare”, as administered in the U.S., is completely bereft of any common sense or utility.

As a party, especially as teams of candidates for state and federal office, we would be best served by a new approach to human services. We could bring to the national debate a new argument, a Third Position that would appeal to the basic common sense of many people.

If you would like to discuss this with me, or if you would be willing to host an online forum on this topic, please email me at etzel33@hotmail.com.

Save Social Security, for those that want it

By Mike Slye
Former LPPA Member and Current Florida Libertarian Member

Most people have read the statistics and are aware of the pending social security crisis. The good news is in 2007 Social Security received, via taxes, \$200 billion more than it paid in benefits. According to the Cato Institute, this positive cash flow will last for approximately ten more years. However, after this ten year period the Social Security Administration (SSA) will be forced to use money in the Social Security Trust Fund.

This money is expected to last until 2040. Unfortunately each and every dollar of the extra \$200 billion that Social Security received was spent on something other than adding to the trust fund. The government bonds that

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Save Social Security, for those that want it (Cont.)

currently fill the trust fund are the promise of the government to itself. Considering that throughout the month of May 2009 multiple rating agencies have been mulling over the possibility of lowering the Treasury Department's AAA credit rating, the promise seems optimistic.

Once again Rep. Ron Paul has introduced H.R. 219, the Social Security Preservation Act. This bill would stop the borrowing of the current excess that is paid into Social Security and actually put it in the trust fund. This solution would certainly delay the problem of when we reach our deficit, however it does not solve the problem. This bill has great intentions; however history has shown this same legislation has been introduced several times and has been doomed to languish in committee and never be seriously considered. Therefore the question remains, how do we face the reality of a system that will go broke in ten years and the fact that according to the SSA, 49 million Americans depend on this system?

Libertarians believe in the nonaggression principle, so I don't propose removing people from the system, but instead provide a slowly phased-in opportunity to opt out of the system. The basis of my plan is we need to reduce liability while retaining current payments. Both could be possible with drastic budget cuts, but that is an unlikely situation.

The Plan*:

Year 0 from the beginning on the plans implantation; anyone age 60 or over and people that subsequently reach the age of 60 are allowed to discontinue paying Social Security taxes, with the condition that they will never receive any benefits. There will be likely very few people that take this option since they have paid into the system for 40 years. However each person that does will reduce future payments and income into the system will remain relatively stable.

Year 5 from the beginning; reduce the age when people are allowed to opt out to 55 and those as they reach the age of 55. This means anyone who was 50 when the program started is now eligible to withdraw from the system. These people will have a greater incentive to leave the system as they have not paid into the system as long.

Year 10; reduce the age to 50 for leaving the system. This means anybody who was 40 when the program began is now eligible to leave. The number of people in the system keeps declining, while still maintaining solvency because the number of beneficiaries are also decreasing.

Year 15; reduce the age to 45 for opting out. Now anyone who was 30 when the program began can get out.

Year 20; allow all people, of all ages, the option of staying in the system or leaving

This is an extremely long process, but the length of implementation is needed to be politically achievable. The cash flow needs to remain constant or politicians won't accept it, the benefits can't disappear or be greatly reduced or the 16% of the country that receives these payments won't accept it and if there isn't some way out of the system, we are back to where we started.

We, both big and small-l libertarians, need to slowly and in a nonthreatening manor introduce freedom back into this country. The numerous programs and polices of socialism were not enacted in one day, we need to use the same incremental process for gaining back our liberties. Social Security is one issue that I believe the country realizes we have a problem; all we as the Libertarian Party need to do is offer them an achievable solution.

*Advanced statistical analysis of how this is economically feasible is available upon request. The article would be 90% numbers if included. Questions, comments or suggestions at slye.mike@gmail.com.

To discuss this matter further, please visit www.lppa.org/forum where a discussion will be started on this subject.

Introducing \$5.00 FULL-TIME STUDENT LPPA Membership

Want to Contribute to the LibPENN?

Do you have something to say? Who am I kidding, we're Libertarians. So why not join the LibPENN, the LPPA Official Newsletter committee. There is minimal commitment and you can work from home on your own schedule. You basically write Libertarian articles that you feel other Libertarians in PA would enjoy reading, send them in and you're done. If you would like to help out, but not write an article, maybe serve as a proofreader or send in article suggestions to the committee.

What kind of articles are we looking for? Current events are always popular and even better if they are Pennsylvania-specific. To get you started, all I need is a title of your masterpiece and a due date. Interested? Contact weneedjohnalt9@yahoo.com for more information.

Thank you for supporting the LPPA!!

The Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania Membership Form

Membership Options

- ◇ Full Membership / Renewal- \$15.00
- ◇ Associate Member - FREE (with valid e-mail)
- ◇ New Membership - \$15.00 (\$5.00 Full-Time Students)
- ◇ 1788 Society - \$12 / month or \$120 / year or more (includes full membership)

NOTE: Full membership includes LibPENN Newsletter and voting privileges at the state convention.

The Libertarian Party is the party of principal. To publically affirm what we believe - and to ensure that our party never strays from our principal - we ask our members to proudly sign this statement.

"I hereby certify that I do not believe in or advocate the initiation of force as a means of achieving political or social goals."

X _____
Signature (required)

Please consider an additional donation to help us grow.

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Member Contact Information:

Name: _____ County: _____
Address: _____ Email: _____
Phone: _____

Mail form to: The LPPA 3915 Union Deposit Road, #223 Harrisburg, PA 17109

Visit www.lppa.org to join, renew or donate online



Local Libertarian Meetings Near You — *Get involved today*

ALLEGHENY CO.— 3rd Wednesday of Month, 7pm — Ritters Diner

LANCASTER CO.— 3rd Tuesday of Month, 7pm — Symposium

DAUPHIN CO.— October 6th, 6pm — Doc Holidays, New Cumberland

YORK CO.— 4th Monday of Month, 7pm — First Capital Dispensing Company

CLARION CO.— 1st Monday of Month, 5:30pm — BJ's Eatery, High Point Road

MONTGOMERY CO.— 1st Wed. of Month, 7:30pm — Phila. Inquire Building

CUMBERLAND CO. — 2nd Monday of Month, 7pm — Market Cross Pub

BUCKS CO. — 2nd Wednesday of Month, 8pm — Apple's Rt. 611 Doylestown

For More Libertarian County Meetings, Visit the forum at www.lppa.org

Recycle the LibPENN, share with a friend or neighbor.



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