



Chair:
Ray
Roberts

LOCAL CANDIDATES BLACKLISTED

This is the first time I've been a candidate for public office. I'll be on the November 2 ballot for state house District 23.

District 23 looks like a distorted ice cream cone that includes downtown Gainesville, the east half of Alachua County and with the bottom of the cone ending in northwest Ocala.

It's gerrymandered for the Democrats. The Republicans don't even bother to challenge an incumbent Democrat (currently Ed Jennings). I view that as an opportunity for me.

But, I was surprised to learn that being a candidate would blacklist me from the Gainesville Sun's opinion page!

Shortly after deciding to run, I sent a Speak Out column to the editor criticizing the "CHOICES" health care sales tax (You can read it at www.rayrob.org). A week or so later, I saw the editor Ron Cunningham and asked him if it was going to be published. He told me liked it but when he saw that I was a candidate for office, he had to reject it.

So, after stewing about it for a while, I sent the

editor this letter (which apparently won't be published either).

Blacklisting of Candidates

Editor:

After reading the headlines and the funnies, I usually turn to the Sun's opinion page. I particularly enjoy the letters to the editor and the Speaking Out columns written by local people. I have occasionally contributed myself.

Shortly after I decided to run for political office though, I learned that candidates are blacklisted from the opinion page! Submitted opinions are rejected outright, even if the topic is not a campaign issue (it happened to me).

As I understand it, the rationale behind this policy is to prevent any appearance of bias. No candidate gets access unless they are responding to direct criticism from the editor or someone else.

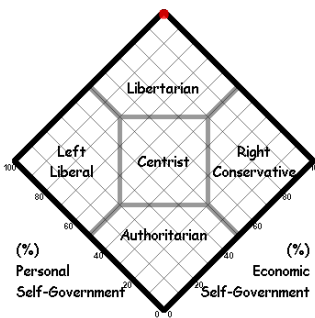
Otherwise, it appears that for about 4 months, each candidate is limited to a single 500 word "On the Stump Speech". Following this restricted exposure, the Sun endorses candidates for its readers (a final biased act).

My opinion (which you won't publish) is that your editorial pages would be much more colorful, informative, and beneficial to the voters if you allowed candidates to openly communicate their views. You might consider a "Candidates Corner" where honest-to-goodness opinions could be expressed and debated. Fairness could be achieved by limiting frequency, allowing rebuttals, and rejecting character attacks.

Instead the voters are left with boring, noisy, annoying advertisements and sterile "fair" news reporting.

I think you need to get on the "reality" bandwagon. It would attract more readers and would serve the voters and the community better.

- Ray Roberts



CAMPAIGN SEASON KICKOFF!

- Bumper Stickers
- Yard Signs
- Buttons
- T-Shirts
- Campaign Literature
- Libertarian Literature
- "Slide Show"
- Refreshments
- Conversation

This is a great time to get involved with the Libertarian Party. Please come, put on a name tag, get acquainted and be better prepared for the campaign season!

"Make yourselves sheep and the wolves will eat you." - Benjamin Franklin

Calendar

ACLP General Meeting

(1st Tuesday of every month):

Time: August 3, 7:00 PM.

Topic: Campaign Season Kickoff

Location: Downtown SFCC

Board Room, #117

ACLP Business Meeting

(3rd Tuesday of every month):

Time: August 17, 7:00 PM

Location: Unitarian Universalist

Fellowship library,

4225 NW 34th St.

More info at www.lpalachua.org



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