



"It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself." -Thomas Jefferson

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### From the Chair

Catholic Saint Valentine was killed by the Romans on February 14, in the year 269. He was known for constantly risking his life to advocate for those without political power, which was mostly persecuted Christians at that time. Now we celebrate a day dedicated to the most powerful and selfless feeling – love – on the anniversary of his death.

Valentine was not associated with romantic love until legends spread by Geoffrey Chaucer over 1,000 years after Valentine's death. The association isn't surprising, though. Perhaps the greatest expression of love is willingness to sacrifice for fellow humans.

It's so easy to get lost in the day-to-day routine of sunrise, sunset, and everything in between, and when we do pay attention, we are bombarded with messaging designed to distract us from the things we can change. National controversy over which we have zero control or influence dominates the conversation, and we miss the opportunity to drive real change right around us.

The Libertarian message, ultimately, is one of love. We stand on principle, and our unwavering dedication to our core beliefs often requires sacrifice. For that, I am thankful for all of you giving what you can to advance the cause of Liberty. We see you, your monthly contributions, your volunteer hours, and your willingness to engage and serve as ambassadors for Liberty, and we appreciate it.

In return, the LPNC is here to support you in any way we can, and to keep you informed on opportunity to make a difference near your home, all across North Carolina. In today's newsletter, we feature contributions from many members of the Libertarian Party right here in NC, who are looking to make changes to the arts, to gun laws, to the ABC, to the way fund the military, and to our entire outlook on freedom in the Tar Heel State.

We are all here to spread this message of love, of selfless sacrifice for principle, and of putting ourselves out there to advocate for those without political power. Today, and every day, we hope to serve as a guide for you to cut through the noise and focus your energy where real change is within our reach.

-Joe Garcia, LPNC Chair

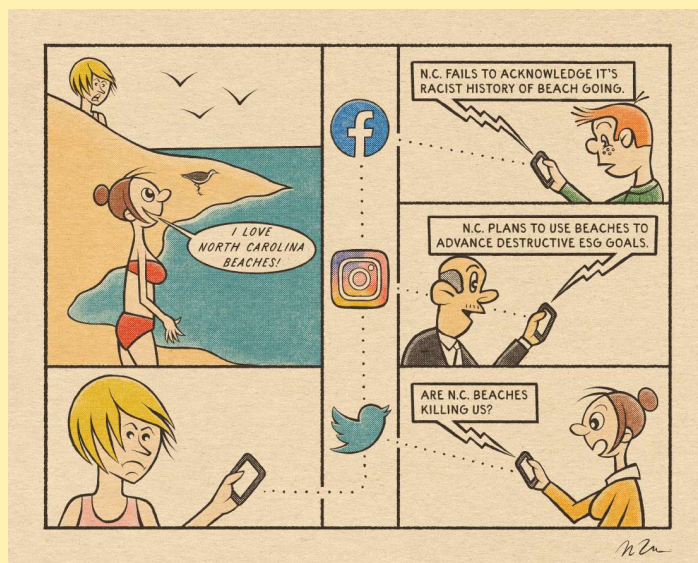
## Messaging Matters

### The way news travels is no accident

by Rob Yates  
LPNC Communications Director

Comic by Noah Zenger

Media is designed to stoke fear and sow division. Fortunately, we are able to ignore it.



Go to any major media source and do a quick scan of the headlines. This test applies to individual sources, like Fox News or the NY Times, as well as amalgamations of other news sources, like MSN dot com. Count the number of headlines that are designed to create tension or spark anxiety. Then count how many announce some sort of positive development, relief, or uplifting news. The disparity is chilling.

This phenomenon is not the sole purview of news on the national stage. Check out any local NC state or city news site or Twitter feed. See how many times the word "breaking" appears, or some derivative, placed strategically and deliberately to trigger people's visceral fight-or-flight response and drive more clicks and extended lingering on that site.

## News is a commodity

Media outlets have battled each other for market share supremacy since corner store readership and annual delivery subscriptions were the prime metric for daily newspapers. As the airwaves became the dominant vehicle for the distribution of information, first through radio and then television, ratings were the driving force motivating news agencies, as ratings equaled advertising dollars.

This model was hypercharged with the rise of the 24-hour news networks. The public-facing product backed by massive corporate conglomerates had to continually convince potential viewers that they had a better product than other channels, and also that it was necessary to keep watching.

To accomplish this, a model emerged based on quick soundbites implying urgency. Warnings lights flashed, alarms sounded, and intense messaging triggered actual anxiety at the prospect of missing a report. This approach, of consistently outdone hyperbole, proved so effective that it spread to sports, pop culture, and even weather reporting.

An unfortunate consequence of this anxiety-inducing marketing model for the news is that, as viewership settled around nebulous "right" and "left" political persuasions, people began to view anyone on the other side as a potential enemy.

Certainly, this is not to imply that political polarization is a recent phenomenon. Rather, while the bulk of the vitriolic political rhetoric historically ebbed and flowed around major election cycles, we found ourselves immersed in "reporting" that sought to present every snippet or sound bite as life-or-death important. (I know this itself sounds hyperbolic. There is not enough room to fully explain here, but [I have written on this in detail](#) if anyone is interested).

## The internet as a news source

Now we are faced with a news model where the internet is by far the primary method of information distribution. Manifestations range from classic media websites, to social media, to podcasts, and encompasses every other variation of sharing information at the speed of light at our disposal. This drives multi-faceted outcomes.

Subscription-based services for journalists and content creators who value truth and nuance have exploded in popularity, showing that some modicum of sanity remains in our national discourse. In contrast, bad information, lies, viral clips lacking context, and even ideological purity tests have all found fertile soil in a world where those with ill intent can say most anything without facing direct consequence, and those with pure intentions acting in good faith and pursuing truth suffer punishment for deviating from approved messaging.

To add to this, the government, including federal law enforcement agencies, are actively engaged in controlling the narrative spread online. Our tax dollars go to throttling free speech and paying professional rabble rousers like "Brooklyn Dad Defiant" and "JoJofromJerz," who serve only one function - to divide people around political ideology and further a government narrative.

To make matters worse, advertising dollars now come from metrics like clicks and the average time per user on a site. With an exponentially larger pool of competitors, those information peddlers who cannot distinguish themselves based on quality or competence instead push the most egregious distortions of the truth in the pursuit of fear-mongering for followers.

For example, late in 2022 I read a headline in a local city paper, "Child Deaths from COVID in NC Increase by 140% Over Last Year." The article itself didn't give the number of covid-related deaths. It talked about anecdotal reports of doctors concerned about strained health systems, it talked about the importance of getting your children vaccinated, and it talked about how dangerous covid was to children under 18 as proven by the increase in deaths not actually reported in the article.

Technically the headline was accurate. Seven children had died with covid in the first 12-month period covered, and ten in the second 12-month period, roughly a 140-percent increase. In fact, [total deaths under 18 related to covid in North Carolina](#) since the pandemic started: 31. Again, that's total. That barely registers statistically. But fear-mongering around covid was the acceptable position to take, and so that's what was being pushed by news agencies at all levels who depend on advertiser dollars and feel the pressure from government-backed harassment campaigns.

## Celebrate Local!

National news is mostly a waste of time, excepting some entertainment value. The tactics adopted by large news organizations remain effective, however, and local state, county, and city news affiliates have adopted these methods, stoking fear and driving polarization.

The good news is that all we need to do is ignore the fear-mongering messaging. It really is that simple. Instead, use that time and energy to go make change where you can actually have a meaningful impact. In this newsletter, we have contributions from people like Joshua Glawson, who is looking for assistance in visiting designated social areas in cities around NC as a way to combat the ABC tyranny. Or Eric Rowell, who is holding local politicians' feet to the fire, demanding that they practice what they preach. Or our very own Phil Jacobson, who brings some common sense to the Ukraine war funding discussion.

We have so many places where volunteers can do wonderful things, help people, and make the world a better place. Turn off the news, and go to your next county affiliate meeting. I promise, you will be happy you did.

## A Return to Freedom

by Joshua D. Glawson

It is often said that North Carolina was "[First in Freedom](#)." From the signing of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence and the Halifax Resolves, North Carolina became the first state to resist the tyranny of Great Britain. Yet, throughout NC state history there have been incremental attacks on that freedom, whether through state controls, state income taxes, bureaucratic red tape, or an overzealous police force. This deterioration of Liberty in North Carolina is hastening.

According to [World Population Review](#), North Carolina now ranks as number 18 in freedom, as of 2023, while, according to the [Cato Institute](#), North Carolina was number 16 in 2019. North Carolina was ranked number 10 in the US as of 2008.

Cato's report suggests the main reasons for the decline in freedom within the state have been caused predominantly by state fiscal spending policies, dwindling affordable housing supply caused by bureaucracy, stringent controls on occupational freedoms, higher percentages of victimless-crime incarcerations, and lower-than-average personal freedoms permitted by state and local laws.

**Health:** [North Carolina](#) spends nearly twice as much tax dollars on hospitals as other states when compared to tax percentages. With regulations preventing the expansion of the private medical market in the state, [Certificate of Need](#) laws have increased state spending on hospitals while simultaneously limiting patient access to medical care. These regulations have undermined the quality of medical care available in North Carolina. [US News](#) has ranked NC as number 30 for health care.

**Housing:** In the NC housing market, there has been steady growth over the past decade, but affordable housing has also become an issue. [The John Locke Foundation](#) notes that this is primarily due to state regulations that put strict limits on lot sizes, home sizes, parking, multi-unit housing, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). These bureaucratic limitations have prevented people from creating more affordable housing and a possible source of income, while cookie-cutter neighborhoods by larger corporations continue to populate large swaths of the state.

**Civil:** When comparing North Carolina's victimless crimes incarceration rates, punishment percentages, and civil restrictions to the rest of the US, a recent report has ranked North Carolina at a dismal [42 out of 50](#) states. This goes beyond the overreaching [ABC control state](#) policies, perpetuation of the unjust War on Drugs, marijuana legalization, out-of-touch digital gambling policies, and strict approaches to gun laws ([35/50](#)). [The Institute for Justice](#) has indicated that North Carolina's Department of Justice continues large transfers of taxes to the DOJ in their equity program, and some of that money is obtained from asset forfeiture programs.

With these three key areas in mind, we as [Libertarians of North Carolina](#) can begin working together towards making improvements and corrections. If we continue to focus solely on big-picture and [national-level](#) ideas, we will miss our mark here in our own state of North Carolina. Change begins within each [individual](#) and works its way outward through our relationships, our work, our cities, our counties, our state, our region, and finally to the national level and beyond. By focusing more of our energy and efforts on these we can show true improvement and incremental progress for our Movement and the state of North Carolina in the name of Liberty. But we can't do it alone, we need your skills and abilities.

Just as free and voluntary division of labor brings success in unhampered markets, this microcosmic Movement in North Carolina will only gain ground with your help. Whether that help is writing articles, tabling or boothing, writing our representatives or our senators, petitioning, public protesting, helping with your Libertarian Party county website, podcasting, providing video and marketing materials, sharing ideas, etc., we will be far more successful with you on our team.

How long will it take you to make a decision? Should you wait until NC plummets to rankings across the board of 50 out of 50, or do we do something about it now while we have a chance? Are you dreaming that Democrats or Republicans will be swayed? Do you wait on the state to make appropriate changes, or are you a person of action that takes your sovereignty into your own hands?

[We need you](#) to help reignite the torch of Liberty in the hearts and minds of fellow North Carolinians, to remind the state and the rest of the country why we were [First in Freedom](#).

*"The urge toward action, i.e., improvement of the conditions of life, is inborn in man. Man himself changes from moment to moment and his valuations, volitions, and acts change with him. In the realm of action there is nothing perpetual but change." - Ludwig von Mises*



Joshua D. Glawson is a writer and speaker in the Liberty Movement. He has been active with the Libertarian Party of California since 2015. He now resides in his home state of North Carolina. Check him out at [Home - Joshua D. Glawson \(joshuadglawson.com\)](#).

## LP in NC

### [A Libertarian Solution to U.S. Financing in the Russia-Ukraine War](#)

As the Russian assault on Ukraine drags on, and tensions escalate and spread far beyond the region, Libertarians find themselves torn. There are those who believe we should be supporting Ukraine no matter what, those who feel we need to get out of the conflict entirely, and many who embrace a range of more nuanced positions in between.

The LPNC's very own Phil Jacobson has proposed a most Libertarian of solutions, allowing for voluntary support of Ukraine and defense of Liberty worldwide without illicit tax, violations of principles, or promotion of aggression.

Phil, currently residing in Raleigh, NC, first began working with the Libertarian Party of North Carolina in the 1970s. He has been especially active since 1987, having served on the Executive Committee for several terms as an at-large member and twice as State Chair. He served on the Platform Committee for several terms. He has also written several Issue Papers for the party, alone and as a co-author.

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### [LPNC Directors on Freedom Forum Radio](#)

Dee Watson, LPNC Political and Public Policy Director, and Rob Yates, LPNC Communications Director, were guests on Dr. Dan's Freedom Forum Radio. The final segment of the four-part discussion airs on WJRB 95.1 FM and livestream on Saturday February 18, at 8 and 9:30 AM, and Sunday, February 19, at 2:30 and 7 PM. Following the conclusion of the four-part series, the entire discussion will be available to stream [on Dr. Dan's Freedom Forum](#).

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### [Ending North Carolina's ABC system](#)

**Josh Glawson** makes a strong case to end North Carolina's monopolistic state-run Alcoholic Beverage Control and the associated archaic laws, which drive revenue to surrounding states, discourage tourism, and are antithetical to NC's freedom principles.

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### **The free-market party should repeal price-gouging laws**

Eric Rowell, long-time Liberty warrior and local Huntersville activist with a track record of success over a decade long, makes the case that the GOP needs to step up and repeal anti-free-market "price-gouging laws."

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### **LPNC Communications Director with Addy Adds**

LPNC Communications Director Rob Yates joins independent investigative journalist and author Addy Adds for a broad interview on the evolving political landscape in our country and in North Carolina, thoughts on recent news headlines, and some Libertarian solutions for social-scale problems.

## In the News

**Supreme Court could hear charter school dress code case (19thnews.org)** (the 19<sup>th</sup> News – January 10, 2023) | **PDF of the lawsuit**

**'We just want to continue operating' | Mooresville town board vote expected to decide next steps for Josh's Farmers Market (msn.com)** (WCNC Charlotte – January 16, 2023)

**Legislative leaders seek new NC Supreme Court review of redistricting, voter ID cases (carolinajournal.com)** (Carolina Journal – January 20, 2023)

**Locke's Mitch Kokai assesses AG Stein's entry into 2024 N.C. governor's race (carolinajournal.com)** (Carolina Journal – January 21, 2023)

**'I was shaken': NC auditor Beth Wood says she was leaving a holiday gathering the night of hit-and-run (wral.com)** (WRAL News – January 23, 2023)

**North Carolina Senate OKs limits on LGBTQ school instruction (msn.com)** (WSOC News – February 7, 2023)

**<https://www.wral.com/racist-or-necessary-to-protect-property-moore-defends-anti-rioting-bill/20709978/>** (WRAL News – February 9, 2023)

## Candidate Spotlight

### Interview with Gubernatorial Candidate Shannon Bray



This month, the Tar Heel caught up with Shannon Bray. Shannon **recently announced** he will be seeking the Libertarian nomination for the North Carolina governor race in 2024. This is not his first run as candidate in NC; in both 2022 and 2020 he ran for the open Senate seats, including a widely publicized race last year that included Green Party nominee Matthew Hoh featuring a debate at Davidson College.

We wanted to talk to Shannon about his influences, his interests, his main issues, and his motivations. We also wanted to get his thoughts on messaging, which is a major topic of discussion at local, state, and federal levels of the LP right now.

***Tar Heel:*** Shannon, thank you for taking the time to speak with me today, and congratulations on your announcement. What influenced your initial interest in politics and what specifically attracted you to the Libertarian philosophy?

**Shannon Bray:** I often joke that it was Sarah Palin that drove me to the Libertarian party but politics in general started to divide people running up to 2008. I took an online political test to find where my ideals best aligned. What I discovered was I was indeed Libertarian. When I moved to North Carolina in 2012, I registered as a Libertarian.

The presidency of Donald Trump ultimately led to a decision to let my voice be heard. At the time, I was working for the DoD and the government spending issues kept furloughing my paycheck. As a person who has worked for the federal government most of my life, I felt I had a unique perspective that others would gravitate to.

***Tar Heel:*** This is your third major race in NC. What motivates you to sign up each time? Is it the same underlying drive, or do you find different reasons for different races?

**Bray:** With the absence of the US Senate race, I had anticipated taking a backseat in this election, but I have had a number of communities reach out and ask that I run this year; this time for Governor. Technology has advanced dramatically and most of our leaders lack the knowledge to take advantage of technologies. I guess to answer your question, each time has been different. What makes this time different is I have already raised more money for this coming election than I have for my previous two attempts.

***Tar Heel:*** We have been talking about messaging recently. You are very publicly a proponent of crypto and other blockchain currency solutions. What got you into them, why do you think they are important, and where do you see them going?

**Bray:** Crypto is one of the reasons why it is important that I am in this race. My start in crypto goes back several years but my crypto vision is somewhat new. Most people look at crypto as a replacement for fiat currency, and while that is true, the birth of NFTs will change the way our society works with data. Not to mention, DOAs and other crypto-type projects can offer many benefits to local economies. One such example is City Coin.

***Tar Heel:*** Are you concerned about government attempts to intervene in the crypto market, either directly through regulation, or roundabout through the creation of CBDCs?

**Bray:** Yes; government sponsored crypto defeats the point altogether. The people of the world need a decentralized currency that they own and cannot be stolen from them by the government.

**Tar Heel:** Beyond crypto, what issues do you consider to be the most important heading into 2023 and the election in 2024?

**Bray:** Our economy needs help; we are in a recession. The White House is reporting good job numbers but that is only because Americans are having to work more than one job now to get by. This is their answer for counting inflation. I'm a father of three school-aged kids and school choice is important. As a veteran, I also need to ensure that my brothers and sisters have the best resources available to them as they transition out of war zones.

**Tar Heel:** The Green party faced some pretty significant challenges getting on the ballot last year in the latest example of serious gatekeeping by both duopoly parties. What can the Libertarian party do to spread its message and see electoral success despite this challenge?

**Bray:** Ultimately, this is why we must run. As a third party, we want our ideas heard. We want our candidates taken seriously but the duopoly has defined our political structure and made it difficult for independent voices to emerge. Ballot access is a constant fight which is why the Libertarian party and its members work so hard to ensure we have candidates on the ballot. Every vote we get helps us maintain our ballot access. I, and the other third-party candidates, have to fight for each vote we get and absolutely no vote was wasted. Each of those votes helps ensure someone's voice can be heard in the future.

**Tar Heel:** Going further, you and Matthew Hoh became friends during that campaign. Where do you see other opportunities to work together with people on issues where we share common ground?

**Bray:** I would love to see other candidates work together like Mathew and I did. I think it shows how we would work for North Carolina in Washington. That is not the nature of NC politics though. It is a dirty business with both sides throwing in dark money to muddy the waters.

**Tar Heel:** Very interesting, thank you for that insight. Looking more specifically at you, make your governor pitch. What can you bring to the people of NC and why should you get their support? What would you do on day one?

**Bray:** I have a fresh take on what our economy needs and I would like to ensure our state can act without the need of any support from the Federal government. I would introduce cannabis as a cash crop and bring aid to our farmers. Our school system needs a gut check; I'm here to provide it. I am a huge advocate of school choice. With my technology background, I can bring new markets to our state while not risking our environment.

On day one we will have Constitutional Carry by Executive Order.

**Tar Heel:** Following up on that, what would you like to share about yourself personally with people who might be voting for you?

**Bray:** I'm a bit of an open book. After leaving the US Navy, I started working in technology. Most of my life has been documented somewhere online. I understand the threats that face our nation and I also understand some of the domestic threats that face our state. I believe we can replace many of our outdated systems with new technology and we can do so without forcing the bill on our taxpayers.

**Tar Heel:** Thank you again for your time today. Before we go, do you have any final thoughts or messages you want to share with the people reading this?

**Bray:** I appreciate everyone for taking the time to read this. If anyone has any questions, feel free to reach out to me on Twitter at [@shannonbrayNC](https://twitter.com/shannonbrayNC) or through my campaign resources. Thank you.

All of Shannon's links can be found [here](#). Donations can be made [here](#), and his campaign store is [here](#). Finally, check out his [website](#) and his [Twitter](#).

## Chair Chats



### Jeff Scott

#### (recently retired) Mecklenburg County LP Chair

This month, the Tarheel sat down with Jeff Scott, Mecklenburg County Libertarian Party Chair for the past two years. Jeff recently stuck to his promise to not run for re-election, and is now an at-large member of the MeckLP EC.

Jeff has quite the resume beyond MeckLP Chair, as he has run for both sides of the NC legislature, he has run for Charlotte city council, and he is an adjunct professor at the Mises Institute. He has a background in cold, hard statistics and finance, but is passionate about the arts and musical theater.

With roots in both San Francisco and Charlotte, and a Hollywood blockbuster life filling in the blanks, Jeff brings a unique perspective that drives his calm determination to advance Liberty. We asked him about his life, his motivations, his concerns, and what he thinks should happen next, in a wide-ranging interview.

**Tar Heel:** Jeff, thank you for taking the time to talk to us. You are in Charlotte now, but it was a bit of a circuitous route to get here. Can you give us a little of your backstory, and what made you finally come to North Carolina?

**Jeff Scott:** California was a rat race, and the rats were winning. That's my official answer! In truth, it's a bit mundane. Let me call up my repressed memories. The years 2009-2011 were brutal for my family. Looking back, it was a blur of economic anxiety, for which I am still paying the price. We were living in the Oakland hills, and even though that is a wealthy community, we were hammered by the recession. The Bay Area, California was no longer fit for us, though I once swore I would only leave it kicking and screaming.

We looked at Nevada, Colorado, Texas, and NC. Job insecurity has always been a big concern for me, and Depression-era stories from my family still haunt. Charlotte as a financial center was a clear choice. The first weeks in South Charlotte in June 2011, I felt like I was living in a country club, and I could feel my blood pressure dropping.

**Tar Heel:** Politically, NC is different than California, though Charlotte and San Francisco have some overlap. What differences jump out the most to you? And where are things really the same everywhere?

**Scott:** In California, I put up with smug liberals from the late 70s in an environment where the average voter had to subordinate themselves to looney blue impulses, sentiments, and hectoring. Before there was TDS, there was Reagan Derangement Syndrome.

But a lot of the progressives I knew were more open minded and intellectually curious. The state party evolution from civic cesspools of corruption into cultural revolution Khmer-Blue is hard to grasp. They're all Chicagoans now. They know its hypocritical and filthy behind the scenes, but "Who me??" I find Dems everywhere I go heartily embrace the Orwellian version of truth that stems from party fidelity, and the glue of that devotion is big money for big military, big intelligence, big pharma, you name it. They embrace the spoils system and they don't think that is a bad thing.

As a normal person I find it very, very scary to be independent minded yet in the political grip of grifting authoritarians. Constant fear is constant power. In my melancholic moments, I would describe myself as living in a state of compliant anxiety and not optimistic about recovering lost freedoms. Am I going to be the guy standing in front of the tank? No. Nor will I be self-immolating if I have tickets to Wicked.

One thing I noticed about conservatives in NC is that they fall for all kinds of crap. And the urban sophisticates (a.k.a. highly paid operatives in the DC swamp) know how to push their buttons and get the reaction they need. Very few people-- and I include many Libertarians - know how to take a deep breath and wait before they react. One must assume every paper and social media trend is the National Enquirer blaring at you and that it's possibly true that Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster had a love child, and his name is Roy Cooper! But c'mon man! Can we just recognize that news headlines are trying to sell you something and you should ignore them for your mental health?

**Tar Heel:** *You have spent time in the two states with the most registered Libertarians, but what about you? When did you realize you were Libertarian? What made you aware, or what was your turning point?*

**Scott:** In the interest of brevity, let's stick to the 60s and 70s. There was no turning point for me. I was intuitively libertarian very early on. My parents leaned Republican but had Democratic friends, so I heard arguments as a child in the early 60s about the welfare state and self-reliance. I admired Rod Serling of Twilight Zone fame and recall my formative years as an idealistic liberal: anti-war, anti-censorship, anti-bigotry. I read some sci fi and enjoyed political intrigue and visions of dystopia. I enjoyed westerns with rough justice. Most critical fact: Star Trek, not Star Wars!

I was in high school when Nixon resigned, and I didn't know anyone who was vocally pro-war. I remember consciously not registering for selective service and not showing up for my high school yearbook photo and wanting to escape an overcrowded, uninspiring public high school to go to work. I graduated early but I didn't pursue college until my mid-20s. In Southern California I had access to conservative views. I read Rand right after high school, and then found Birch literature: antiwar, yet also anti-communist and anti-elite.

The skin magazines were subversive too, which I loved for the articles! Hugh Hefner and Bob Guccione were popular back then, expanding minds among other body parts. James Dale Davidson had a popular tax column in Penthouse. I eventually stumbled on the Mormon financial publications and others in the hard money cult. Even on the national best seller lists you could find stuff by Robert Ringer and William Simon's *Time for Truth* about the New York City bankruptcy, ghost written by Edith Efron of TV Guide. Both of them were in the Rand orbit.

The assassinations of the Kennedys and King was like a big open wound that wouldn't heal and every conversation about what came to be known as the "deep state" was mumbling skepticism, a wink and a nod, "don't ask don't tell." I read a lot of *Mad Magazine* and *National Lampoon* with the pre-libertarian scribblings of P.J. O'Rourke. I just picked up weird left and right stuff all the time, not to mention the music mags, like *Rolling Stone* and *Creem*.

The Church committee was raging by mid-70s, drugged out soldiers were piling into Oceanside along with Vietnamese refugees, inflation warnings were coming true, gas lines were a thing. Public hypocrisy and economic panic were the gifts that just kept feeding my basic cynicism. By 1980, when I turned 23, and before I went to college, I was already hanging out with a lot of Libertarians, Objectivists, and academics in both California and the U.K.

**Tar Heel:** *And you have run for office several times as a Libertarian. How were your campaigns each similar, and how were they different? Any particular stories or memories that stick with you?*

**Scott:** My first campaign for City Council in 2017 consisted of Steve DiFiore II and I holding hands and jumping into the deep end of an unheated pool with no lifeguard. There were lots of naïfs in that cohort. We made a good impression, I think, largely because it was assumed we were going to lose and not have an influence. The other candidates, mostly Democrats, were nice to us overall. I enjoyed some of that camaraderie.

The Republicans were losing their grip, and they were a bit testy. The progressive takeover was not stoppable, and they knew it. They were frustrated by the post-Trump wave of anger, and they did their best to distance themselves, but to no avail. I remember the first call that I got from Jim Morrill of the Observer, "Jeff, why aren't you raising money?" That's when I lost my virginity. Then Jim ratted me out as working at TIAA (but only a temp contractor there) and they read me the riot act. The two back-to-back Congressional races had their highs and lows.

I was a spoiler in 2018 in District 9, beating the R to D spread 3X. Due to the scandal of ballot harvesting, that race was investigated and got wide national coverage. I spent a week in Raleigh at the BOE hearings, which was a great adventure.

Then there was a do-over in 2019 where I was even more ignored along with the Green candidate, my buddy Allen Smith. Both of those were huge national races, with big, big spending. At least candidate (now two-term Congressman) Dan Bishop said to my face that I didn't raise enough money to join him on stage in debate. Crass but honest.

I ran again in 2020 against State Senator Jeff Jackson, but with covid and the fact that a well-funded Republican entered the race, I couldn't get myself off the ballot in time. I didn't do anything that year, didn't even accept campaign donations. I don't know what people see in Congressman Jackson, who campaigned as an inveterate liar for the military industrial complex. He looks more like Elvis than me, so he wins.

**Tar Heel:** *What can you share about your campaigns that might help future candidates? What should they all be aware of, what pitfalls lie ahead, and what expectations should they have coming in?*

**Scott:** This will all be covered in my next project, "Humiliation! The Musical." Fact is, I don't know how candidates win elections. There are highly compensated, talented people who execute successful election plans, and they're working for the RNC and the DNC, not the LNC. I don't know what matters. I thought I knew minimum, baseline requirements, but even then, I can't be certain.

My ideal of a candidate is not the same as voters. Poised and professional? Probably. Nice looking, good suit, not a dweeb? Clear voice, enunciation, thinking on your feet, stage confidence? Working the room, owning the conversation? Take a good photo, have a clean record, be likeable, polite, graceful, thoughtful, take your pick! Maybe voters want any ass-kicking liar with bad hair and worse teeth who knows exactly how to find the center of energy and who intuitively uses the force of his or her personality to amass attention. It's possible that none of that other stuff matters.

**Tar Heel:** *You are more cosmopolitan than perhaps the stereotypical image of a Libertarian would reflect (editor's note: Jeff and I attend musical theater together). Art is, by its very nature, inherently political in that it is so deeply engaged with humanity. It should be the biggest sole marketing platform for Libertarians out there, with a rigid adherence to free expression, and yet we see so much art seems*

to have abandoned its purity and grown into a mouthpiece for political parties. Do you agree with this, and, if so, why do you think this has happened?

**Scott:** I'm okay with impurities. Hadestown "[Why We Build the Wall](#)" was not written with Trump in mind but the accident of history turned it into an unfortunate trigger that slightly mars an otherwise beautiful show. When it's over and your conversation drifts to border security, you missed the show. The occasional crowd-pleasing laugh line doesn't bug me because everyone realizes it's not part of the esthetic experience, that it's just a side of junk food, like the Doritos placement in Wayne's World.

We live in a highly commercialized and increasingly politicized art world. I'm triggered when I'm pushed to think about how impoverished we are as audiences to put up with more than a flicker of politically correct bullshit.

A cheap laugh in an expensive seat will always stick in my craw because it's first a time waster, and second, it's a reminder some audiences want to reinforce their prejudices about transitory issues. Consuming something challenging and non-topical isn't comfortable. In truth, I'm only a partial snob because I like a wide range of well-designed, artful communications to audiences in language, dance, music, stage, painting, sculpture, etc. But if the purpose is limited to the didactic, or for propaganda, or experimentation in medium, or increasingly, athleticism and special effects, well then, it's just not an artistic experience.

An object could be valuable in a utilitarian way, for instance, not in a contemplative way. If it doesn't tackle your conscience and lift you temporarily out of your place in the universe, you're not getting what you really need. You might be trying to get it, and you can be entertained while you're trying, but you're not getting that payoff. There's a big picture you haven't tapped into yet.

Many performances can be artful without delivering an artistic experience. But you can hope and learn. My 20-year-old self was not a Sondheim fan, for example. It all sounded like treacly garbage to me, with dressed up Noo Yawk inside jokes. My 60+-year-old self can barely see through the tears. I was late to the party. I'm not an early adopter! It only took me a several decades so there's hope for everyone!

**Tar Heel:** *Charlotte is the biggest city in North Carolina by a good bit, and it certainly has a solid arts scene, but it is not the most Libertarian friendly, at least not in terms of political affiliations. What barriers do you see to our message spreading in both Charlotte and in Mecklenburg more broadly, and what can we do to overcome them?*

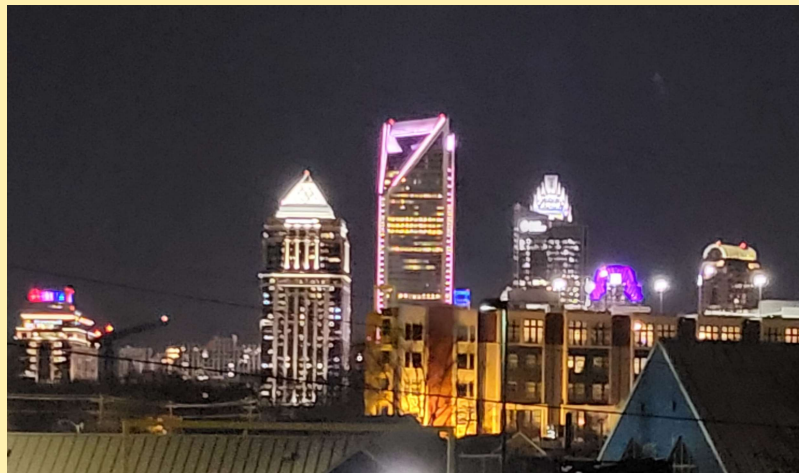
**Scott:** That's the 64-Million-dollar question. I've got my niche and I do what I can. I waver between unrealistic and realistic goals. I have lofty ideals but so does Klaus Schwab, and he's winning! I cringe when I see a Libertarian tweet, "set the world free in our lifetime." It's so irrational and disrespectful, simultaneously setting the bar too high to do anything and too low to get anyone off their ass to find a niche. It's like an empty uber-religious incantation, "We must do everything for nothing!"

The hard truth about Charlotte is that politics is dominated by the Democratic party activists and opposition is weak at best. My guess is that they will try to scare right-of-center voters with more riots to get non-Democratic voters to move away. All we can hope for is an intra-party fight to weaken their hold but I don't see that happening. I will hold my nose and my wallet until I wither away.

**Tar Heel:** *MeckLP has a very tight group that feels familial. Can you talk about how they got that way, and where you are planning to take MeckLP in the next year?*

**Scott:** We lost our two at-large members, Olivia Broadway and Charlotte Ebel. Olivia moved to South Carolina and Charlotte moved to Salisbury. The five of us had a good working relationship and have handled our disagreements professionally. With my three terms up, Steve is taking over as Chair and I have selected the pretentious title of Chair Emeritus which no one will honor yet will keep my fragile ego healthy.

We want candidates and we want to run campaigns. Without people running we are a skeleton crew and invisible no matter how much outreach we do. Showing up at street fairs and events is all good and fun, but it's just a holding pattern until candidates come along to take the initiative and sell themselves to the voters.



## Book Review

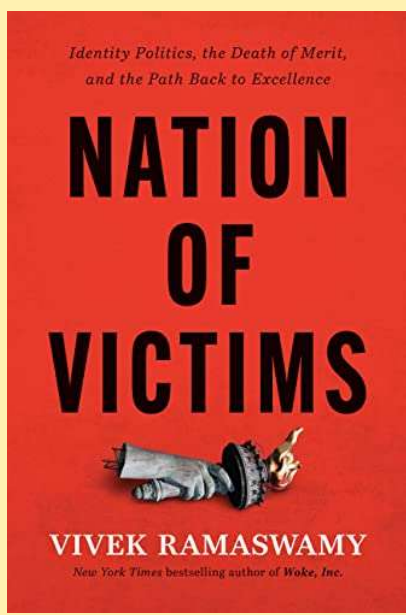
### **Nation of Victims: Identity Politics, the Death of Merit, and the Path Back to Excellence, by Vivek Ramaswamy**

**Review by Rob Yates**

Vivek Ramaswamy follows his excellent book, "Woke, Inc." with another solid offering. Ramaswamy has a true American story, with roots in India through a high-end education leading to him founding and eventually exiting a company. From that experience, he now uses his platform to highlight the beauty and brilliance of the American opportunity and the degrading impact that victimhood culture, identity politics, and the associated virtue signaling has had on all the successes of the free market.

His prior book looked in much more detail at corporate hypocrisy, where massive companies champion whatever the catch phrase of the day is while supporting terrorist massacres in other countries or facing huge lawsuits for unchecked pollution of rivers right here in the United States, for example. In this book, he spends more time looking at the effect of the cultural shift from excellence to blame has had on our productivity and way of life. He shows how much opportunity is missed and how corporations and the politicians they have bought and sold are incentivized to perpetuate this paradigm. Then he offers some solutions.

*Nation of Victims* is well researched with compelling arguments, and balances a deadly serious tone regarding the direction of our country with a playful sense of humor as Ramaswamy reflects on his personal experiences. I can't say I agree with every proposal he makes, but I certainly recommend the book, and I commend him for acknowledging the problem and attempting to make serious suggestions on how to fix it.



## Upcoming events

### Rage Against the War Machine

On February 19, the National Libertarian Party will be hosting a rally in Washington D.C., Rage Against the War Machine, along with the People's Party, to demand an end to the U.S. Government's meddling in foreign governments, war profiteering, illegal detention of journalists, and so many other deadly consequences of a military industrial complex that seeks endless foreign war.

From the [event website](#): Join us at the Lincoln Memorial at 12:30 pm on Sunday, February 19, on the anniversary of the Ukraine War and President's Day Weekend, to Rage Against the War Machine! Veterans, speakers, rock musicians, comedians, and more. After the rally, we'll march to the White House and deliver our demands to Warmonger-in-Chief Joe Biden.

Several members of the LPNC are planning on attending. Some of them are organizing transportation and cooperation. If you are potentially interested in getting involved, [let us know](#) so we can help you make connections.



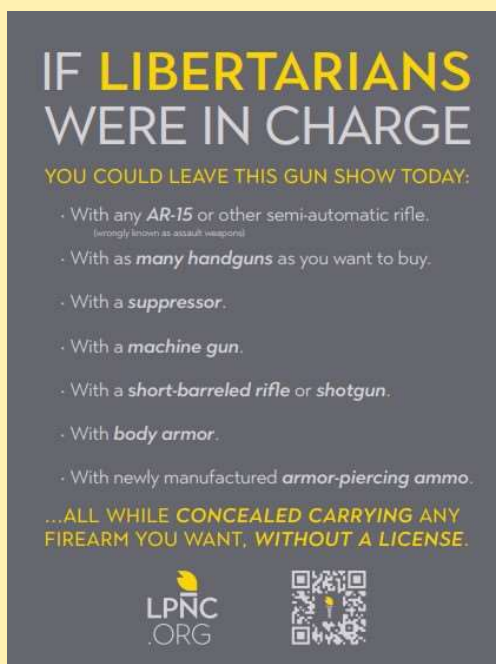
### Concord Gun Show

After our success at the Capital City Gun Show in December, we've decided to table the Concord Gun Show on February 25 and 26. Gun shows attract people with whom we tend to share principles; people who just want to be left alone, who are skeptical of the government, and who will likely be very open to the ideas of Liberty.

Each day there are two shifts. On Saturday, February 25, first shift is from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM and second is from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. On Sunday, February 26, first shift is from 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM and second from 1:30 PM Sunday. The event will be at Cabarrus Arena & Events Center, 4751 Highway 49 North, Concord, NC.

If you can give some of your time, please, [sign up here to register for a shift](#).

We are looking for two or three volunteers for each shift. LPNC tabling events are always fun, interesting, and informative. They give us a chance to hear from people who share our concerns and to spread our message effectively. We want to carry our momentum from last year and start regularly tabling gun shows across the state, but we can't do it without your help.



## 2A Talk

### Gun Law Nullification



by Justin Hinckley

LPNC 2nd Amendment Liaison Coordinator

Nullification is an oft-discussed topic amongst Libertarians. The idea a citizenry or smaller government body can declare a larger government body's laws null and void is an appealing one to us. Nullification is a term used often in reference to attempts to undermine or sabotage the enforcement of federal regulations and laws. To better understand the broad topic of nullification, let us look at some recent examples.

In the early 2000s, a new term became common in the news vernacular, "sanctuary cities." Though the movement has its roots in the 1980s, much of the activity for which the sanctuary movement is known occurred in the 2010s. These were cities which, by their own city council or mayoral actions, declared their cities as sanctuaries for illegal immigrants. Most commonly this took the form of prohibiting local police and government offices from detaining people for or questioning them about their immigration status. It also often includes prohibitions on cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

Today, there are estimated to be over 500 cities, counties, and states that have declared themselves sanctuaries in the US. Covering a similar time frame and gaining momentum over the last decade is the nullification of drug laws in US states. While many drugs remain illegal at the federal level, an increasing number of states are declaring medicinal and recreational use of a variety of substances to be legal.

Now let's examine what characteristics generally encompass successful nullification campaigns. Nullification campaigns often involve two different strategies. The first strategy is to change the governmental perspective of the given topic in a legal or official sense. This would be through legalization or a change in policy that results in a different approach to the topic by the government in question. The second strategy is to refuse to assist federal authorities in the enforcement of their own laws and regulations. This occurs through prohibitions on cooperation with federal agencies or through the restriction of funding or resources directed at local/federal cooperation programs.

I feel the need to pause and praise both the sanctuary and drug legalization movements for their success in expanding their ideas both officially through government actions and socially through the growth of public support for such ideas. It is indisputable that more people use drugs legally (at the state level) in the US than were doing so before the drug nullification movement took hold. It is likewise indisputable that there are more places for illegal immigrants to live without fear of pursuit by local government entities than before that movement took hold.

Finally, we come to the guns. Success surrounding nullification of federal and state gun laws has almost exclusively occurred in the courts. We have also seen numerous victories in state legislatures with regards to gun laws, beyond nullification drives. The multiple resounding victories in these avenues does not excuse the firearms community from its lack of significant victories in the nullification space. This is not through a lack of effort, but a lack of effect.

In fact, during the same period of the sanctuary city and drug law nullification movements in the 2010s, a "firearms freedom" movement was building. This movement led to nine states passing firearm freedom legislation, essentially declaring federal gun laws irrelevant to firearms and accessories built within each respective state, due to them not being subjected to the Interstate Commerce Clause. These gun laws were quickly struck down in federal courts, as the courts have a long history of abusing the Interstate Commerce Clause to ensure federal power over all manner of things not mentioned in the Constitution.

Some firearms freedom acts remain in effect but have little to no consequence when it comes to protecting or expanding gun rights. But momentum is building again. Recently, we have seen a flurry of activity in the space of gun law nullification. The revival was in part due to the declaration of sanctuary counties and states for the 2nd amendment. These laws, to date, have proven entirely symbolic and do not seem to influence federal enforcement of gun laws throughout the US. Part of the reason for this is many of these laws and resolutions have no funding mechanisms, do not provide penalties for government officials violating the acts, and do not grant protections to citizens who may be arrested or prosecuted by higher levels of government.

Nonetheless, these gestures have generated fervor in the firearms community, now creating approximately a dozen states with sanctuary laws (depending on how "sanctuary law" is defined) and over 70 counties in NC which have declared themselves sanctuary counties. Here is where it gets interesting, as firearms nullification could be gaining traction to stifle authoritarian gun legislation in a real way. Illinois passed an inaccurately titled "assault weapons ban" and almost immediately 80 Illinois sheriffs declared they would not be enforcing any of the provisions of the legislation. For context, there are 102 counties in Illinois. As of this writing, no significant actions have been taken in Illinois to indicate the commitment of the sheriffs, but a majority of sheriffs opposing new gun regulations is a promising development for sure.

It is unclear if this new gun law nullification movement will amount to any significant progress in expanding gun rights in the US. If we are to learn anything from the immigration or drug activists, it is that nullification can be used to great effect when done correctly. We in the gun community must continue to find creative ways to employ nullification to forward the cause of liberty in relation to the right to self-preservation. Litigation is certainly the strongest tool in the gun rights arsenal, but nullification offers a path to increased public support and a bulwark against federal overreach. As we continue down this path, I would encourage each of us to consider the tools needed to employ effective nullification strategies and support or implement sound nullification legislation and regulations at every opportunity.

## Reflections from an Old Libertarian

Libertarianism has a long, rich [history in North Carolina](#). As we build the cause of Liberty for the future, we will always remember where we came from and those who worked to get us here. Every month, we will feature an OG Libertarian from North Carolina, telling stories, giving an interview, reflecting on how things are or how things were. It is the foundations on which we stand that allow us to move forward.

## Nationalizing Law Enforcement

by Harvey Carpenter



On September 13, 1994, President Bill Clinton signed into law the "Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994" better known as "The Crime Bill." Joe Biden, who was then a Senator from Delaware, drafted the Senate version of the legislation. Within the bill's 356 pages was a provision that funded 100,000 new police officers.

On September 12, 1994, then Charlotte City Councilman Mike Jackson (Republican) submitted a resolution to the Charlotte City Council proposing that the city of Charlotte would NOT accept any funds apportioned to Charlotte by "The Crime Bill" for additional police officers.

I and two others appealed to then Mayor Richard Vinroot (Republican) and the entire City Council to SUPPORT Councilman Jackson's resolution. In our presentations, here were some basic points that we asked everyone to consider ([link to VIDEO](#)).

- Wasn't "The Crime Bill" legislation a gross infringement on the Bill of Rights (and more specifically the Tenth Amendment), which delegates all specific powers within the Constitution not enumerated to the Federal Government to be reserved to the States and to the People?
- Federal mandates will ALWAYS accompany Federal subsidies - every time, without exception. In other words, there is no money received by Local and State governments from the Federal government that does not also come with directives on how that money may be used.
- How necessary was it for the city of Charlotte to receive Federal funding in order to provide police services? Was Charlotte not sufficiently viable economically to fulfill this important need of the Community, without looking to the Federal government for financial assistance?
- It was NOT an oversight by our Founding Fathers that local law enforcement was reserved to State and Local jurisdictions and was therefore, by design, separated from the Federal Government and the US Military.
- Accepting Federal funds for local policing was a very dangerous precedent that would further the slippery slope towards centralizing law enforcement powers under the Federal government, and away from the States and Local Police.

The Charlotte City Council's response? An almost unanimous rejection of Councilman Jackson's resolution. Amongst the discussions between Council members prior to voting was heard a snicker or two, along with a quip by then Mayor Richard Vinroot that "there must be a full moon out tonight." One Councilman's response during the discussion, Republican Pat McCrory (who would later become Governor of North Carolina) stated that he would rather see Richard Vinroot's Charlotte receive the appropriated funds than Washington DC's Marion Barry receiving the money.

Almost thirty years later the march towards a centralized and nationalized US law enforcement continues, unfortunately at rapid speed.

## Get Involved

Do you oppose the initiation of force to achieve political or social goals? Do you challenge the cult of the omnipotent state and wish to defend the rights of the individual? Are you already Libertarian, but you want to do more and you aren't sure how?

There are lots of ways to get involved. You can [Join the Party](#), [Volunteer](#), or [Connect with a County Affiliate](#).

Go here if you want to [Just Ask Questions and Get More Information](#)

## Support your Fellow Libertarians

The Tar Heel is honored to promote the endeavors of LPNC members. Here we feature businesses, podcasts, blogs, seminars, or anything else our members send our way.

### Whiskey and Wisdom Podcast

Check out New Hanover Affiliate member Tyler Yaw and his co-host Chris Kellum in their exploration of the world, its people, and its spirits. They smartly and succinctly cover a truly eclectic array of engaging topics, all while enjoying the quintessential American libation.

[Discussing life's most fascinating topics over a good glass of whiskey.](#)



### Libertarian Solutions Online Learning Course

Dr. Mary Ruwart is one of several venerable Libertarian scholars taking part in Libertarian Solutions 3.0 online learning course run by Liberty International. This year's main theme is "How to Share the Libertarian Message with Just About Anyone." Dr. Ruwart is encouraging all LPNC members to take this affordable and acceptable course, and it offering a discount code for those who do. Use code "MARYRUWART" to get 20% discount on your ticket!

The Libertarian Solutions 3.0 online learning course will give you an enhanced understanding of the real-world application of libertarian principles; teach you how to effectively communicate these life-enhancing concepts; and illustrate how to awaken your friends, family, and acquaintances to the "good news" of liberty.

\* February 15 - April 1, 2023

\*12 live sessions

\* 3 LI World Conference Madrid scholarships to win

\* Enroll now and find more information at <https://liberty-intl.org/l3>

- Mary J. Ruwart
- Walter Block
- James W. Lark
- Per Bylund
- Ken Schoolland
- Dean Ahmad
- Spike Cohen

**LIBERTARIAN SOLUTIONS 3.0** **LIBERTY INTERNATIONAL**

I will be speaking at the Libertarian Solutions 3.0 online learning course. Sign up with the coupon code "MARYRUWART" to get a discount.

**20%**

liberty-intl.org/l3

## Convention Season

### LPNC 2023 State Convention

Friday March 10 - Sunday March 12, 2023

Village Inn in Clemmons, NC

Hello again, liberty lovers - convention is right around the corner! Please join us again at the Village Inn in Clemmons, NC, Friday March 10 - Sunday March 12, 2023. We'll kick off with our Friday night social at 6:00 PM and wrap up on Sunday as usual, but this year we'll be shifting more speakers to Sunday so we can get all of the business done on Saturday.

We hope you will join us for this important gathering of libertarians from across the state. Please register using the [website link](#).

If you have any issues registering or would like to ask any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. You may email [convention@lpnc.org](mailto:convention@lpnc.org) or [secretary@lpnc.org](mailto:secretary@lpnc.org) with any concerns.

### Bylaws and Rules Committee Report

The Bylaws and Rules Committee has completed its [final report](#). The committee will hold a final open forum to hear comments and answer questions about our recommendations report on Friday, February 24, at 7 p.m. on [Zoom](#). Consider taking [this poll](#) as well.

Debate on this report will be one of the two major business items of the Convention. The other is the election of a new Executive Committee.

While we don't expect the Convention to have time to consider all recommendations, let alone adopt them, the committee believes all these recommendations will be good for the party. We urge all LPNC members, particularly those attending the Convention, to read the report and come prepared to offer meaningful suggestions on how to improve them.

### WakeLP 2023 Convention

Wednesday, March 1, 7-10 PM

Join us for our 2023 annual convention as we select delegates for the LPNC convention. We will take care of some party business and elect new officers for the next two-year term. It will be held at our regular meetup spot at Tobacco Road (downtown Raleigh) on March 1st from 7-10 p.m. and all are welcome to attend. Delicious snack food will be provided! We look forward to seeing you.

**LPNC CONVENTION DELEGATES:** If you wish to attend the LPNC Convention (March 10-12) as a WakeLP delegate and cannot attend this meeting, please inform John Underwood ([secretary@wakelp.org](mailto:secretary@wakelp.org)). To be eligible, you must have been a WakeLP member since at least early December 2022.

**PARKING:** If your bill comes to \$15 or more, Tobacco Road will reimburse you for parking in the Powerhouse Square Parking Deck behind the restaurant. Ask your waiter or waitress for a voucher.

[WakeLP Convention Details](#)

## Letters to the Editor

Every month, we will feature a few of the emails we receive from the dedicated people of North Carolina. Opine on anything you like, but relevance to our cause and North Carolina will get precedence. Please submit your responses to [communications@lpnc.org](mailto:communications@lpnc.org), and include your name, county, and level of involvement.

Our best letter last month came from Will:

I'm just wondering if you are familiar with the lesser known **founding father Robert Yates**? He was perhaps the most intelligent and libertarian of the so-called "anti-federalists." His writings under the pen-name Brutus are prescient.

Will Ferrell

*Editor's Note: Thank you Will. I was not familiar with him, but he is now my favorite Founder.*

## Support Freedom, Peace, and Prosperity in North Carolina

In the 2020 election cycle, total spending on federal elections between the Republicans and the Democrats was over \$14 Billion (with a "B"!). In North Carolina alone, the two major parties spent over \$280 million on one of the most the most expensive Senate races in history.

As the party of principles, we reject the massive amounts of dark money pouring into campaigns that produces bought-and-sold candidates loyal to donors and special interest groups at the expense of the American people. We rely on you for financial support to keep pushing back against the two-party behemoth and advance the causes of liberty.



## Advertising

Have a business, blog, podcast, product, or service that you are interested in advertising to fellow libertarians? Reach out [here](#) for inquiries about ad space.

Managing Editor - Rob Yates  
2A Editor - Justin Hinckley

