



"But let me offer you my definition of social justice: I keep what I earn and you keep what you earn. Do you disagree? Well then tell me how much of what I earn belongs to you - and why?" — Walter Williams

In this issue...

- [From the Chair](#)
- [Courage in Human Action](#)
- [GNRC's Andy Stevens](#)
- [LP in NC](#)
- [Affiliate Call to Action](#)
- [Candidate's Spotlight](#)
- [Chair Chats](#)
- [There Is No Need to Protect Men from Trans Athletes](#)
- [School Choice](#)
- [2A Talk](#)
- [In the News](#)
- [Book Review](#)
- [Support your Fellow Libertarians](#)

From the Chair

We are in the midst of a flurry of legislative activity, and the Libertarian Party of North Carolina has everything you need to understand what is going on. We have sent out calls to action when we had a chance to influence important legislation concerning your rights, and you all responded in force. I am deeply thankful for that.

Not that things are finished, and we are here to get you through it. We showed up to push for constitutional carry to be the standard in NC. We will see where that goes over the next few days and weeks. Our Communications Director, Rob Yates, sat down for an interview with Grass Roots North Carolina's Andy Stephens to look into it in detail.

School choice is on the docket, and one of our at-large Executive Committee members, Angela Humphries, has been a stalwart voice fighting for our children's education in NC for a long time. She has some specifics here, and I chime in on the issue as well.

Other issues around children are in the legislature, regarding sports participation and drag shows, as well as appropriation bills, criminal justice bills, and so much more. If you want to be involved with the Party reading, examining, or identifying legislation that we should speak to, please reach out. While we are past the crossover date already, there will be plenty of opportunity to lobby the General Assembly in order to get Libertarian results.

We are excited to announce that we will be launching the third season of our Liberty iNC podcast this month, and we will look at all this legislative activity with LPNC members who are engaged on the front lines. Keep an eye out for further announcements around that.

We are also putting out a call for candidates. This year is a great time for the LPNC to pick up some local offices, and we have resources that we want to share with those of you interested in making the commitment and sacrifice to put yourself out there and run for office.

I am excited to see things materializing. All the hard work from so many Liberty warriors is coming to fruition, and it is hugely gratifying. But it's by no means the destination. We are just getting started.

-Ryan Brown, LPNC Chair



Courage in Human Action

by Joshua D. Glawson

LPNC Strategic Communications Adviser

"Human action is purposeful behavior." -Ludwig von Mises



Courage invokes us to take action.

For Aristotle, courage is the virtue that helps balance our instincts against recklessness and cowardice.

For Biblical teachings, courage is the opposite of fear, and courage is to face fear while remaining positive for Good reason(s).

For Thomas Jefferson, courage empowers the individual to become as an army of one; "one man with courage is a majority."

For Ayn Rand, "Courage is the practical form of being true to existence, of being true to truth" and living confidently within that courage.

For Ludwig von Mises, courage is thrusting one's self into the intellectual battle of the individual versus the collective, for the victory of truth and freedom for all.

Overall, having courage has more to do with the actions we take than merely having a thought. There are many people with brilliant ideas in the world, and there are fewer people who express those ideas, and even fewer are the number of people who take action with their ideas. It often takes courage to act on our ideas.

There are ways we can instill greater courage while building a growing network of like-minded, liberty-loving, individuals...

The first thing is to train your mind by reading more about each topic you are passionate about, and the ones that cause you the most frustration when discussing with others. Each person in the group should be learning.

Secondly, have in-depth conversations with your local chapters, to ensure you and others learn more about the topic. This is a technique like the division of labor for critical thinking. Include frequently holding presentations on these topics.

Third, actively invite new people to the meetings, even if it is simply for these discussions. By having new people, we encourage participation and growth for everyone involved. Create an environment where people feel welcome and comfortable to speak or voice their disagreements.

Fourth, give each person in the group a chance to speak, and give each individual an official title and a duty. These titles do not need to be lofty, and the duties do not need to be grand. Do not give big titles to people who do not have the time, energy, desire, or capacity to fulfill the role. Giving each person a title and a duty instills confidence, bolsters a sense of unity and shared responsibility, and encourages action. Our groups should not be strictly controlled or dominated by a central authority figure just because of their title or experience.

Fifth, work on a particular cause within your city together once the group agrees on the topic. When we practice working together as a group on a project, we can see how we as individuals can come together and accomplish great things. This further instills courage and confidence, while it works on practical applications for instilling Liberty in the world.

Sixth, coordinate with other local groups on projects for shared causes. By utilizing our networks for larger projects, we increase our chances of winning locally and regionally. These incremental wins reinforce courage, nourish confidence, and build up the number of active participants. We scale up our wins by branching out.

Seventh, whether we win or lose, throughout each step come back together as a group and as individuals to learn from one another and for our own sake. In chess, we learn that more can be learned from a lost game than from a game that is easily won.

The more we engage in action, the more we as individuals learn and grow. When we coordinate with others, and continue to spread those connections further and further, we grow this movement well beyond our regions, overcoming the current difficulties we face.

We each joined the Libertarian Party because we believe in Liberty and that it has an invaluable purpose in the world. Let us be outspoken in our regard to that value and become more than people of thoughts and words, let us take purposeful action for the cause of Liberty. It is far better that we take action and learn from failure than sitting passively in social groups complaining in circles about our constant frustrations and losses after doing nothing. Let our movement not be in vain. Take action. Be the change.

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GNRC's Andy Stevens

by Rob Yates, LPNC Communications Director

The Tar Heel sat down with Andy Stevens, Vice President of Operations and Board member at [Grass Roots North Carolina](#) (GRNC), an organization working tirelessly to defend our Second Amendment rights in North Carolina. Andy is also the North Carolina State Director for [Gun Owners of America](#) (Gunowners.org). A lot has been going on that affects your 2A rights in NC, much of which the LPNC has communicated to you in real time over the last month. Because of pressure from Liberty warriors, we saw both the removal of NC's anti-Black pistol permit restriction law, and the override of Governor Cooper's veto that would've left that Jim Crow law in place.

Now, we are looking at the potential for Constitutional carry to be reinstated in NC, but, as always is the case when politicians are involved, we are up against politics. Few people have a deeper understanding of the issue and the inner working of the surrounding politics than Andy, so we wanted to hear more from the insider's perspective.

Tar Heel: Andy, thank you so much for talking to us today. Before we get into the bills and changes in the legislature, tell us a little bit about yourself and about GRNC. How did you get involved, and what is your role there?

Andy Stevens: I'm a North Carolina "transplant" having grown up in Chicago, Illinois. I received an appointment to the United States Military Academy, West Point just before turning 18 and never turned back. During my service I was assigned to the XVIII Airborne Corps at Ft. Bragg in the early 80s and liked the state even back then. I permanently relocated to North Carolina in 2000 and have been a resident ever since. In 2012 and 2013, I became interested in gun rights and started using my free time to visit legislators in Raleigh as an individual. During my visits, I often ran across F. Paul Valone, GRNC President, doing the same thing, and saw the effectiveness of joining voices and efforts with an organization demonstrating a record of success. Truth be known, Paul Valone cornered me in a hallway one day and made me an offer I couldn't refuse, lol. The rest is history. Currently I'm a member of the GRNC Board of Directors and serve as GRNC Director of Legislative affairs and Vice-President of Operations. By the way, we are all unpaid, 100 percent volunteers. No dues, money, or donations going to fancy suits and shoes.

I'd also point out to your readers that I am the NC State Director with Gun Owners of America. Again, in this role with this organization I take great pride that I am not a paid employee, but, by my choice, an unpaid volunteer.

I do what I do for gun rights because I believe what I do is important beyond monetary compensation. Therefore, no one can falsely tag me with the "gun lobbyist" moniker.

Tar Heel: GNRC has accomplished so much in the past. Is there one legislative accomplishment of which you are most proud?

Stevens: Well, there have been many, but, of course, what got me into this fight in the first place was our racist, Jim Crow Pistol Purchase Permit system. As I began to collect firearms, I found it totally in variance with the Bill of Rights to submit to special trips to a sheriff's office and unnecessary waiting to receive permission slips of paper to purchase handguns, especially when rifles and shotguns did not require such procedures. Thus, my satisfaction in achieving its repeal a few weeks ago. Doing so over the veto of anti-gun, anti-Liberty Governor Roy Cooper was icing on the cake.

Tar Heel: That's a great segue into the current situation. Before we look at HB 189, though, can you explain, briefly, the pistol permit restrictions that were previously codified in law? We have covered this for our readers before to a degree, so I was hoping you could focus in particular on the operational aspects of that rule – why it contributes to so many delays in purchases and who it affects.

Stevens: Both our previous Pistol Purchase Permit and our current Concealed Handgun Permit systems were and continue to be flawed. They stand between citizens immediately exercising their rights to keep and bear arms. Despite state statutes, one hundred individual county sheriffs administer both programs. Some stay within the intent of the law, and others historically and currently abuse it.

The PPP by statute required your county sheriff to issue a permit or declare why not within fourteen days of application. Now, in Stokes County, my home, my Sheriff could accomplish this within 30 minutes. The same day! Not too inconvenient at all, except for the fact one had to go there in the first place.

However, sheriffs in counties like Wake, Guilford, and especially Mecklenburg, decided they could take weeks, months, years to drag out the issue. My two organizations have sued the Wake and Mecklenburg County Sheriffs multiple times and won judgements over the now repealed Pistol Purchase Permits and we are currently suing the Mecklenburg County Sheriff in Federal Court over his willful delays issuing Mecklenburg County applicants their Concealed Handgun Permits.

Interestingly, the newest Republican member of the NC Legislature, Representative Trisha Cotham, lives in Mecklenburg County. As a result of her recent Party switch, she and her family have been receiving credible threats, including death threats. At the legislature, she is provided physical security. At home, she is left to her own devices. She has applied for a concealed handgun permit, but, of course, her sheriff, Garry McFadden, has yet to see fit to issue her one. No better example of the need for permitless, or Constitutional, carry could be made, and this is the real-world example, not just a hypothetical example.

Tar Heel: That's so important to understand, as HB 189 would eliminate those barriers from people like Representative Cotham who have real need for protection. Can you further explain to the Tar Heel readers exactly what HB 189 does?

Stevens: In a nutshell, HB 189 would accomplish several objectives. First it would allow anyone in North Carolina who met the qualifications for issue of a CHP permit the right to carry in North Carolina without an actual permit. This, of course, would solve the perilous situation Representative Cotham currently finds herself in. It would also solve the real, although temporary, situation new residents find themselves in when they move to North Carolina and establish residence here. One cannot immediately apply for and receive even a temporary permit and new residents are thus left without being able to legally conceal carry until application and receipt of a permit.

Second, it specifically retains and does not repeal our current system of sheriff-issued concealed handgun permits. This is important because reciprocity with other states would terminate without an individually issued permit. Very important if you carry a handgun beyond our state's borders, for example. There are also federal statutes that limit where one can carry concealed without a permit that differs from where one can with a permit. Therefore, it is important to know the laws governing open and concealed carry in North Carolina. We can discuss this further in a moment, if you like.

Third, it reduces the age for lawful concealed carry to 18 versus the current 21. A federal appeals court has already ruled artificial age restrictions above age 18 are unconstitutional.

Finally, the last major piece of the bill would allow for expanded places of carry for elected officials. As was pointed out in the bill's debate, elected officials do make decisions that result in threats, including death threats. Not just Representative Trisha Cotham, either. Most importantly, this would allow legislators and elected officials to carry in the legislative buildings. This expanded carry privilege currently exists for some elected officials such as judges, district attorneys, and the like.

Tar Heel: But it wasn't clear cut, correct? Specifically, what was the training requirement? Why was that potentially problematic, or maybe a better question is, why are people over-reacting to that?

Stevens: Yes, training has become an unnecessary flashpoint regarding this bill. Ordinarily, a "true" constitutional carry bill would not encumber the citizen with a mandated training component. The bill, as originally drafted, was to be a Constitutional carry bill. However, such a bill would not, and I repeat, would not pass in the current legislature as a true Constitutional carry bill. The Speaker of the House, Representative Tim Moore, directed that a training component be added to the bill or he simply would not run it through his chamber. After much discussion, we at GRNC and GOA decided to support the bill with a training component to advance the bill. The merits of the bill even as a now-redefined permitless with training bill represent a significant improvement over our existing concealed handgun permit statute. During the hearing process, we recognized changing the nature of the bill required renaming it as well. Constitutional carry was removed from the title and the bill was simply and accurately renamed the "NC Freedom to Carry" bill.



Tar Heel: Following up on that, this seemed like a done deal just a few days ago, when you, LPNC members, and other defenders of Liberty gathered at the State House to make our voices heard. What changed since then, and what is the outlook right now?

Stevens: What changed? Well, at the last minute, the NRA stepped in and, without ever having been a part of the discussion, decided to kill the bill as it was not a "pure" Constitutional carry bill. More importantly, they killed it because it was not "their" bill. But guess what? Ask the NRA, where is their bill? The reality is, they never offered to run a Constitutional carry bill in this session of the legislature. Don't take my word, but ask the principal bill sponsor, Representative Keith Kidwell, of his opinion of the NRA. I dare say you won't be able to publish the result.

Of course, the reality also exists that some of the Republican supermajority in the House are not as fully supportive of gun rights as we'd like. There continues to be grumbling in the caucus of both chambers that voting on Constitutional carry, or even this version of permitless carry, is a step too far for them. Why? Because it may cost them their reelection in competitive districts. In other words, legislators often are more interested in their self-

preservation and reelection than they are in the natural and Constitutional rights of their constituents. Surprised? Don't be! That's the reality of why, for example, it's taken ten years to repeal the PPP.

Tar Heel: The LPNC put out a call to action for people to sign your petition, which seemed to make a difference. What else can people do to send the message that they do not support politicians who do not support their rights?

Stevens: Encourage and support their competition. Run for political office yourself, or support candidates who share your views and positions. Do not concede the political battlefield to incumbents interested merely in their own reelection. In our situation, unfortunately, the best place to challenge incumbents is in the primary and not the general election. That's where unaffiliated voters can play a tremendous spoiler role. As for the Libertarian Party, develop and promote your own viable candidates. The key will be to focus on breaking the monopoly of the two-party system in Raleigh. Winning a well targeted race or two will send fear into the rest who will discover it "could happen to them," losing an election, too.

Tar Heel: If this ultimately fails, how can we hold our elected officials accountable?

Stevens: Politicians who are focused on reelection are often unwilling to take controversial positions and simultaneously make calculated decisions that take their base of support for granted. After all, "who else will gun rights voters vote for?" Replacing them at the ballot box is generally done during the primary, but promoting viable, electable third-party candidates, such as Libertarians, comes into play because, unfortunately, the reality is 95 percent of incumbents of either party who choose to run for reelection generally win.

Tar Heel: While we acknowledge that the LPNC, the GNRC, and other defenders of Liberty don't see eye-to-eye on every issue – in fact, we think it would be awful if everyone agreed on everything – we are big on single-issue coalitions where we work together to move causes forward where we do agree. What can Libertarians in North Carolina do to help you all move the needle toward protecting 2A rights for all the citizens of our state, and where do you see GRNC playing a role in helping amplify the actions we are taking in the LPNC?

Stevens: Add your voice to ours! Sign up for our GRNC and GOA state level alerts notifications to keep informed of developments, and most of all, follow the suggested actions to take. Our rights are continually under attack. We must remain vigilant, and we must forcefully push back against every assault upon our right to keep and bear arms.

Tar Heel: Andy, thank you so much for your time today. One final question for you, what message do you have for lovers of Liberty out there who want to preserve 2A rights, but also want to do so in a safe and responsible manner? How can they move forward, and how can they make their voices heard?

Stevens: Don't give up the fight. Get involved yourselves. Get others to raise their voices with yours. Join organizations of like-minded people like GOA, GRNC, or other freedom-endorsing groups. Liberty is not a two-party affair, either. The Libertarian Party of NC has long been recognized as one that fully supports Constitutional guarantees and freedoms. LP of NC candidates for office who return our GRNC Candidate surveys are generally, without question, rated as GRNC 4 STAR.

We at GRNC and GOA do not believe HB 189, or something similar, is dead in the current session. We will be working proactively with bill sponsors to advance the merits of this bill in the current session and will undertake efforts to improve its prospects, if necessary, as we move into the next general election cycle. Again, subscribe to our GRNC and GOA state level alerts and stay informed.

I've enjoyed talking with you today and I look forward to doing so again.

LP in NC

[Why Gold Is Such an Effective Weapon Against the Government's Monetary Scheme](#)

LPNC Strategic Communications Adviser Joshua D. Clawson makes the case for gold as a hedge against government overreach in this article originally published for the [Foundation for Economic Education](#).

Seeking new affiliate team members!

The LPNC affiliate team is seeking regional liaisons to assist counties or regions in becoming official affiliates of the LPNC. Liaisons are responsible for following up with local organizers, as well as keeping open communication with those already active. They serve as coordinators between local groups and the LPNC; offering guidance, sharing information and resources, and updating contact information. They should be organized, with strong communication skills, and the willingness to attend virtual, bi-weekly meetings and work collectively to give updates, resolve issues, and find new opportunities.

Meetings are every other Monday at 8 PM.

Please e-mail Kimberly Acer at county_organizer@lpnc.org if you are interested!

Candidate Spotlight

LPNC Gubernatorial candidate Mike Ross attended a city council meeting in Fayetteville and wrote about his experience for the Tar Heel.



On Tuesday, April 11, I had the great privilege of standing with the passionate people of Fayetteville, NC, as they gathered together against the naked power grab the city council is attempting. When I reference the "uniparty," I mean that elected officials from both parties put their own interests ahead of their constituents', without fail, and Fayetteville's city council is proving no exception. As disheartening, if unsurprising, as it was to see politicians being politicians, the resolve of the Fayetteville citizens who turned up to make their voice heard was exponentially more encouraging.

The issue at hand is a [proposal](#) by the [Fayetteville City Council](#) to extend the councilmembers two-year terms to staggered four-year terms. The council has moved the proposal forward thus far notwithstanding the fact that a similar proposal was [voted down](#) by almost 65 percent of voters in 2018. They are proceeding despite the presence of four new councilmembers on the ten-person body, all of whom have far to go before proving their merits to the voters.

Maybe most concerning, the council has moved the discussion to this stage without a shred of self-awareness, as the same city council [voted not to investigate themselves](#) or Mayor Colvin, barely a year ago, in the face of serious allegations of unethical behavior. The accusations came from former Councilwoman Tisha Waddell, who [alleged](#) serious impropriety and corruption on the part of the mayor and some council members prior to tendering her resignation in protest.

Seeing elected officials declare to their constituents that they no longer feel that they should face scrutiny and be held accountable for their performance at the previously agreed upon schedule, I find myself asking why more than anything else. The political figures who come to mind in discussion of extended terms – Hitler, Mao, Xi, Putin – are not people with whom any decent person, and certainly not any elected official in the U.S., should seek association.

This is not to say that the Fayetteville council members are despotic tyrants on the same scale as some of the worst people in recent history, and I want to be clear I am not implying that at all. I am simply pointing out that there is no discernable, articulable, rational reason for the council to seek extended terms that isn't completely self-serving, and completely self-serving is a dangerous pathway for politicians to follow.

When we say that power corrupts, we mean it. It's not difficult to believe that the mayor was engaged in shady dealings because he is able to do so with very little fear of repercussion. It's just human nature. The entire philosophical bedrock of governance on which our country is built relies on the idea that elected officials are accountable to their constituents. Extending their terms of office is an action diametrically opposed to the principles of a democratic society, and more in line with an entrenched corporate board at a failing company.

In the face of this stark reminder that government will ultimately fail you, every time, without exception, the feeling I left with was not despair, but hope. I saw engaged citizens from all parties – Democrats, Republicans, Independents, and, of course, Libertarians – [uniting](#) against this power grab and demanding that their voices be heard.

Ending government overreach and making sure the public interest is the only special interest that North Carolina serves is the biggest reason I am running for Governor of this great state, and the people of Fayetteville left me encouraged that my vision of uniting regular people against our power-hungry rulers is not only possible, but that people are looking for change.

"To be, rather than to seem," our state motto is not just a catchy phrase - it's a call to action, to be true to ourselves, to be true to our values, and to be true to the principles of Liberty and freedom that unite us as Americans. And that means holding these politicians accountable and demanding that they do the same. Because at the end of the day, the real power doesn't come from the politicians. It comes from us, the people. All we have to do is decide we will no longer be ruled by the far-mongering and power hoarding from our political elites, and together we can [#FireTheUniparty](#).

So to the Fayetteville City Council and all the other power-hungry politicians out there, I say this: we see you. We know what you're up to. And we're not going to let you get away with it. We'll be watching, we'll be organizing, and we'll be voting.

And to the people of Fayetteville, and of North Carolina, I promise you that, as Governor, I will never betray your trust. I will always put your interests first. Everything I do will be to restore your power, increase your Liberty, and improve your life. "To be, rather than to seem." It's not just a motto - it's a way of life. And if we stay true to that, there's no limit to what we can accomplish.

Mike's website can be found [here](#), volunteers can register [here](#), and donations can be made [here](#). Finally, check out his [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

Chair Chats



This month, the Tarheel sat down with [Orange County](#) (not that Orange County!) LP Chair Matthew Clements. Matt has lived in Orange County since 1995 after graduating from UNC with a degree in Biology and now is tasked with building out an affiliate that recently split from Durham.

This should be no problem, given Matt's experience organizing and coordinating with Durham, Wake, and other Triangle-area Libertarians, building a history of youth-focused engagement, community service, and social events. Matt is also a two-term veteran of the state EC and frequent member of the convention planning committee.

Matt works in the IT industry now, after decades in hospitality. He also writes and does photography work for [Inside Carolina](#). A devout UNC fan and a passionate Liberty warrior, Matt is currently focused on connecting with Libertarian leaders of the future at UNC, and is taking applications for faculty advisor to help facilitate that initiative.

Tar Heel: Matt, thank you again for sitting down with us. Before we get into the politics of things, tell the readers a little bit about yourself. Where are you from, what brought you to North Carolina, and what kept you here?

Matthew Clements: I was born in Camden, NJ when my dad was stationed in Philadelphia. Then, when I was five, we moved to Wilmington, which I consider now to be my first hometown. AP Calculus changed my commitment from NC State to the University of North Carolina in 1990. After moving to Chapel Hill, I've lived in Orange or Durham County since then, and only lived in South West Durham for a year or two. In 2007 I bought a townhouse in Carrboro and have been active in the community volunteering for the Ronald McDonald House, TABLE, and other organizations. At this point Orange County is home to me and I couldn't consider living anywhere else.

Tar Heel: That's quite a story, and an interesting progression. Outside the politics, what drives you? What are your interests, your passions, and what do you do with your down time?

Clements: I am a voracious reader and love to stay on top of world and local events. I really enjoy live music and sports. I have a part time position covering the University of North Carolina Baseball team for Inside Carolina as a staff writer and photographer. I also enjoy playing disc golf, camping, hiking, hunting, and target shooting.

Tar Heel: OK, getting into the political side, what specifically was your "red pill" moment? When did you realize you were Libertarian?

Clements: I think that once I realized that the War on Terror and the War on Drugs were two symptoms of a dysfunctional bi-partisan rigged system I opted to join the Libertarian Party and become active in letting people understand what a consensual relationship could be between the citizens and government. Over time I realized that our endless wars were going to be the downfall of our society and the financial system that the United States had to enforce upon the world with the removal of the gold standard and the Petro-Dollar was going to create conflicts that inevitably were going to lead to global misery.

Tar Heel: Following up on that, what issues are the most important to you now? Specifically, on a broad scale, and then in North Carolina and your locale, if the answer is different, and why are those important to you?



Clements: Government picking and choosing winners and losers. When you look at Orange County, for example, and the geography and political makeup, Democrats who haven't changed their views in 20 years are now considered conservative. So you have old school democrats, and then your Marxist utopian "government can fix everything type," and they keep adding on, with a huge reliance on property taxes to support it all.

If you look at Orange County, and then Durham County and Chatham County, there is a Walmart on the outskirts, just outside of Orange County. Orange County residents pay for the infrastructure, like the highways to get there, and we spend plenty of money that keeps it in business, but we get none of the property tax revenue. I admit, it does

provide some Orange County resident with jobs, but it's a minimal amount, and they can't afford the houses in Orange County with the money they make there anyway.

Meanwhile, Buc-ees was looking at building a facility right where 85 and 40 meet. Residents here wanted the high-paying jobs and they liked the potential increase in revenue from sales tax so the government could provide more services. In the end, the town council was too restrictive, and Buc-ees left, taking the jobs and the tax revenue with it. [editor's note: [Buc-ee's Pulls Out of Orange County, Citing Commissioner Reception - INDY Week](#)]

See, the services are increasing, but they're never paid for, not really. They put up bonds without realizing it's just a future tax. They say we don't like roads, asphalt, gasoline, and so on, without realizing someone is going to provide that service no matter what. Pushing away high-paying jobs and good services is like sticking your head in the sand and wishing problems would go away.

Now, we do have some nice services. We have one of the nicest animal shelters in the state. We've got great parks, great bike amenities, subsidized public transport, lots of things that are nice but fall outside the limits of what reasonable government should support. When they're paid for predominantly by property tax, it puts the burden on one segment of the population, which is certainly not a Libertarian approach at all.

Orange County Libertarians push for a more diversified and expanded set of businesses. Also, remember, this is university town, and guess who doesn't pay taxes. Sure, there are affluent jobs associated with the university, but the people who work the rest of the jobs – janitors, cafeteria workers, etc – live in Alamance county, because they can't afford Orange County housing, just like the Wal-Mart employees. And businesses can't stay open on Franklin St., as taxes and rents are too high.

I'm not trying to burn it all down. If we could just get government to make rational decisions, not pick and choose winners, especially when all the donations money comes from real estate developers. We end up with these silly government restrictions, like a certain percentage of developments have to be "affordable housing," which doesn't exist in Orange County

Tar Heel: I have a similar situation in Charlotte, where I have found myself pushing back against city council's intent to relax zoning restrictions, which is normally antithetical to my beliefs, but they are only doing it at the whim of developers who are the biggest contributors to their campaigns by a wide margin.

Clements: Yeah, it gets silly. We had a drought like ten or fifteen years ago, and OSHA did such a great job convincing people to reduce water that they had to raise their rates to stay open. But that's what happens when you centrally plan distribution. There are unintended consequences, and they can hurt people. OSHA did a good job at what it wanted to accomplish, but there are always unintended consequences.

Tar Heel: Following up on that, as we break down the demographics of Orange County, you live in an area that **doesn't necessarily skew Libertarian**. This is something we previously discussed with Travis [Groo – WakeLP Chair], Jeff, and Steve [Scott and DiFiore, prior and current MeckLP Chairs]. How do we make progress in areas where the Liberty message is facing strong headwinds?

Clements: We have to go further supporting causes like ending the War on Drugs, getting the government out of every aspect of our lives - like defining whom you can or cannot marry, being more responsible with the local resources (aka taxation), diversifying our local tax base by being amenable to business reducing the burden on property taxes, eliminating crazy concepts like excessive licensure. Just look at the 'certificates of need' for medical practitioners to get equipment like a new MRI machine to provide competition. The Libertarian platform does not fit nicely on the left/right axis and there are tons of examples where our platform and ideas are more 'classically liberal' than the Democrats or even Socialists or Communists.

The way that our political system is set up right now, it's all about getting the money from the people that got you elected, and then giving them favored programs that get them back money. That's not good governance. It doesn't matter what you believe personally, if we can show people how corrupt the system is, with the kickbacks, the picking winners and losers, and all while ignoring the average person, we can get them to join us in pushing back.

Just look at how corrupt the court system is. Think of pollution – why can't we sue polluters? They are subject to fines when they screw up enforced by the same people whose campaign funds they provided to get those people elected. Look at Duke – they're a utility company. Why do they have such a huge lobbying budget and political advocacy department? You wonder until you see what happened with the coal ash spill and how they never faced any real scrutiny. We need to amplify these messages.

Tar Heel: I want to ask you about your campaigns, but first, one more question on Orange County. What do you see that is unique in your affiliate, and how do you leverage that? In the same vein, how is Orange County similar to other places in North Carolina, and what lessons can we all share in terms of advancing the Liberty cause in our state?



Clements: One thing we are trying to do in Orange County is work with Durham and Wake as the Triangle Libertarian group. We're volunteering at different events – Habitats for Humanity, food banks, going to do outreach. We have a unique, golden opportunity to take advantage of a force multiplier with a giant affiliate who is doing really well and who can provide assistance, guidance, and chart a path.

Tar Heel: Can you expand on that a little in terms of sort of starting a new affiliate, but working from a strong, established base with people where you have a long history of success?

Clements: Orange County is looking at itself as kind of a start-up, with a three-stage goal. First, we need to get a critical mass of people registered as Libertarians. Get them involved, make them aware of what we're up to. For example, Earl, Ashley, and I worked on gun safety events. We worked together with gun shops on common sense gun safety proposals, like keeping guns away from kids unsupervised.

Next is to show people there are alternatives to the two wings of the duopoly. The endless wars – war on drugs, war on terror, war on poverty – all the wars we're losing. Maybe we should have a war on farmer's markets, so they can win.

Third, acknowledge it will be difficult in the short term to get people elected. Instead, we want to make people aware of issues where we can have an impact. For example, we have really good community policing initiatives, but it's smoke and mirrors. There are no changes in medical marijuana laws, no effort to expunge the records of people caught in the war on drugs, it's ridiculous. Just follow the money, check the legislation. I will say, it gets interesting when Libertarians have to decide whether to support incremental changes.

Tar Heel: OK, on to running or office, which everyone wants to know about. In 2018 you **ran** for NC House 56 against Verla Insko, and then you **ran** for Carrboro Town Council in 2019. What can you share with readers who are thinking about running? What worked, what didn't, what lessons did you learn, and what should people expect when they register to run for office?

Clements: Well for instance I ran the House 56 campaign mostly as a 'Choice' candidate. In Orange County the Republican Party struggles to find candidates willing to run since realistically and statistically it is virtually impossible for them to garner more than 20 percent of the vote. Personally, I wanted to provide an alternative to electing our House Representative in the Democratic Primary, to get most of the Republican votes, and for people to have a choice on the ballot besides just re-inaugurating the incumbent. However, the long-time Republican activist Dallas Woodhouse found a candidate to run and I met him the day I was signing to run.

In an instant, the dream of thousands of votes vaporized, so I decided to push Insko toward where our citizens and students would want to go. For instance, Insko did not support legalizing or decriminalizing cannabis, or ending the War on Drugs. Check out **my speech** at the Orange County 2nd Amendment Rally in 2018 where I discussed that all gun control has racist undertones, going all the way back to Ronald Reagan and the Black Panthers in 1968.



Tar Heel: OK, just a few more questions before we wrap up. From an LP perspective, if you could see one thing for your affiliate and for the LPNC state party by the end of the year, what would they be?

Clements: With the Orange County affiliate, its exactly what I said – growth, development, and improvement.

At the state level, one thing I love about North Carolina is that there are no issues with caucuses that linger, no social media battles in-state. Republicans and Democrats will do whatever they can to make us look bad, so we need to do everything we can to show leadership, moral conviction, and courage, and to stand up to the tyrannical state.

Then, we need to work with like-minded, single-issue groups, like some that I mentioned, NORML and GNRC, groups that work for freedom, and don't water it down. For example, I can't support the NRA as much as I want. Look back at 1968 with Reagan and the Black Panthers. That is anti-Libertarian.

How about all your freedom all the time. Free speech means you back someone's right to say things, even when its abhorrent. You don't have to

support them, but, if you get to a point where they aren't allowed to say something, you never know what's really going on.

Look at the culture war. The Libertarian Party has been in favor of getting the government out of marriage and supporting gay right since the beginning. We've been the most progressive on those issues since day one. For all these culture war issues, how about we just keep the state out of our lives? You need a government so small that it can't infringe on your rights.

Think about concepts like the Minutemen. The Founders warned us about standing armies. Eisenhower warned about the military industrial complex. We fight about social security and other entitlement funding. Meanwhile, the military industrial complex budget will never be cut.

No one from social security is funding campaign donations while lobbying for social security. Meanwhile, Raytheon is saying, "We need another ten-billion dollar stealth bomber. We need to be able to blow the planet up ten times over. Just help us demonize southeast Asia, and oh, here's a huge donation for your re-election campaign." We really do need to make Orwell fiction again. Look at the fall of the Roman empire, the parallels are so strong.

Everyone lies. At the end of the day, all this stuff we see happen, you realize it's just how its rigged. It's time to unrig the game.

Tar Heel: And what about you? What's next for Matt?

Clements: I don't know if I will run for office again. I want to assist and develop people who want to run for office. The goal of any party, besides our direct work on issues, is to select and develop, and ultimately elect, candidates. Think back to the Ron Paul Revolution, and the critical mass that created. Look at how many people are engaged today because of him. I want to see that energy continue.

The state could work on having a more organized outreach to universities and students beyond partnering with existing groups. Many of them have been good allies, and they have advantages, but they don't exist to help the Libertarian Party, and need to recognize the limitations. I've always had a good relationship with many of the Liberty-focused groups on campus. But we don't have to take reduced freedom and Liberty if we develop our own messaging and outreach, we can go all in. The secret is to find leaders that cultivate and propagate young libertarians through things like mentorships, internships, and jobs. I am involved in doing just that.

Tar Heel: Thank you again for your time. One final question I ask everyone, what advice would you have for people just joining the Liberty movement, with passion but maybe looking for direction?

Clements: First thing is, do what you can to help your local affiliate, primarily. Then, help focus your attention on those causes where you can partner with other groups like NORML or GNRC. Pick something local and go after it, like you can work on changing zoning to encourage affordable housing and not pick winners and losers while diversifying your tax base.

Libertarian philosophy is trying to inject consent back into everyday life. What makes a business transaction not a robbery? ...consent. You have an apple, I have a silver dollar, and I give you the silver dollar for the apple. This is a simple transaction, period. Why do we need to involve anyone else into that, especially the government?

We need young people to find a way to amplify this message. Memes, videos, blogs – bring truth to power in a way that advocates for human freedom. People need to realize that there is power and distraction in social media and the speed of information that go hand in fist. Understand what a distraction it is creating, and the negative feedback loop it relies on, and then make your choices as to what you post and where you interact in a way that is beneficial to the Liberty movement, that helps people. Don't be part of what's dragging the entire conversation down.



There Is No Need To Protect Men From Trans Athletes

(Opinion / Editorial)

by Dee Watson, LPNC Secretary

When the government gets involved and spends billions of North Carolinian tax dollars in public schools, there are going to be a lot of arguments over how those schools are run. The latest argument is over House Bill 574 (i.e. the "[Fairness in Women's Sports Act](#)"), which determines who may compete in men's and women's sports within (K-12) public schools in North Carolina and schools that compete with them. Intramural sports in public colleges are also regulated by the bill.

The Libertarian solution would be to separate education and government, or at the very least to let the tax dollars follow the child so that parents may choose the school system their children attend, instead of having the money allocated for their child held hostage in the public system. If parents could choose where the tax dollars allocated for their children go, then they would influence and pick schools that align with their understanding of how people should be separated in sports. We would have a variety of solutions, and, while different conferences attempted different approaches to delineating people for the purposes of competitive sports, our experience and understanding of the pros and cons would grow in a respectful way while each group consented to the rules in the school of their choice. Instead, we have a system where legislators in the capital are determining the rules for every public school in the state.

Protecting women is great, and I mean that sincerely. Women have fought too hard for too long to see our rights stripped away under some arbitrary pretense that takes away power - which we have battled for, inch by inch, for centuries - and give it back to the government, subject to the whims of elected officials who bear allegiance solely to donors.

Libertarians know all too well how quickly our rights can be stolen. We also know that the only way to protect the rights of women is to defend Liberty for all, and protect everyone's rights, no exceptions. Republicans do a great job of talking up small government and proclaiming they want to defend individual rights, but they seem to use women's rights as an excuse to attack the rights of transgender people.

Who can forget the infamous [HB2](#) (i.e. "The Bathroom Bill") that [embarrassed NC](#). As is always the case when government comes in with a one-size-fits-all approach to "solve" a "problem" that only exists insofar as those elected officials have created it to anger their base, we are now looking at a proposal that creates far more problems than it solves in HB 574.

I am a former Division I athlete. If women weren't able to compete in separate divisions from men, I never would have been an athlete at all. Being in a sport was good for me, as it is for almost everyone who competes. Having clear, direct competition is healthy; it is fantastic that the number of girls and women engaging in competitive and recreational sports is increasing dramatically.

I want to make sure I am clear on one point; I agree that transgender athletes should not be included unrestricted in female-only sports categories. Females should have the opportunity to compete separately from others. If the person is transitioning from female to male, that usually includes hormone treatments that create a huge advantage over any woman not taking those hormones.

Further, males have biological advantages over females in athletics - advantages that have been selected for evolutionarily for billions of years across millions of species leading up to today. They have greater muscle mass, greater hemoglobin, greater height, greater mass, larger lung capacity, and hips that are far more conducive to athletics. Hormones will change testosterone levels, but have little impact on these other things. Males are just biologically different than females and transitioning from male to female does not erase all of these things. There is a clear issue that Riley Gaines should not have had to compete with [Lia Thomas](#), but this bill does not solve that problem.

The categories for sports in the new bill are:

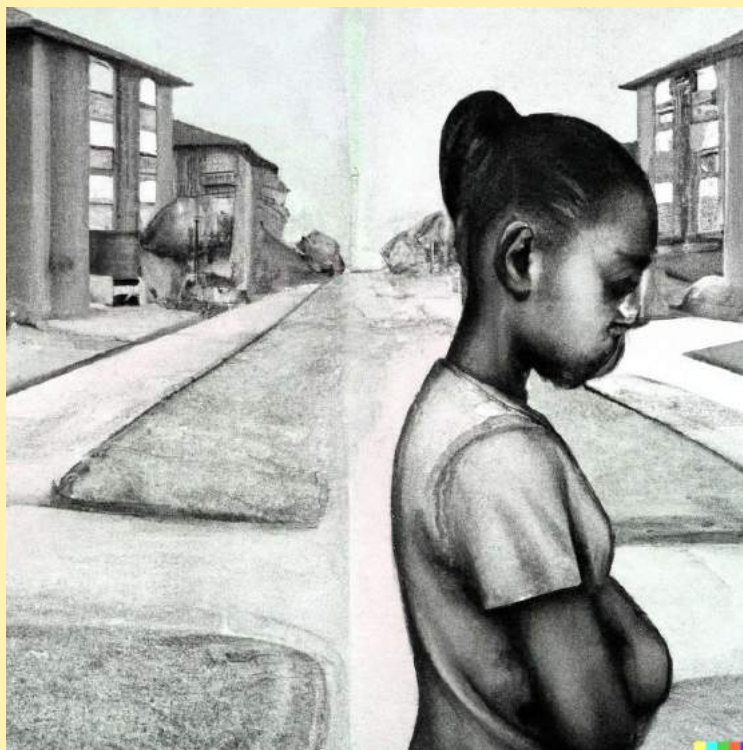
1. Males, men, or boys.
2. Females, women, or girls.
3. Coed or mixed

A simple solution would be to change the males/men/boys category to open and allow anyone, males, transgender, and even women (who are more capable than I) to compete in the open category. This would allow everyone to compete. That is not what the NC Republican legislature did. For the purpose of the bill, the NC Republican legislature defined sex based solely on birth. ***That means that transgender men (biological women who are using hormones to transition) would be required to compete with women, even though they have a medical advantage. So the bill doesn't even protect women's sports, unless it is intended to exclude transgender people from sports entirely.***

There is no need to protect men's sports from Lia Thomas or any other transgender person. However, the NC Republican legislature has bizarrely written a bill that does so. Slightly different bills have been passed in the house and senate, and I hope that they are modified to permit transgender individuals in an open category. Otherwise, I fear that NC will undergo the embarrassment of bathroom bill 2.0., or worse, see the state-mandated end of women's sports.

School Choice

(Opinion / Editorial)



Choose Your Schools, Choose Your Future

by Angela Humphries, At-Large LPNC EC Member

This was originally posted on Angela's blog, [check it out here](#).

While the bill's short title seems corny, readers grasp the gist. There is no perfect bill, however, it is hard to argue against putting options and more freedom to choose in the hands of North Carolina families. Read the full bill [here](#). Not only would the bill expand educational freedoms positioning all NC residents eligible, it removes the requirement to attend public school the prior year, as well as carves out a path for early high school graduation requirements and the creation of a scholarship fund for early graduation students.

What's striking for those who are fiscally aware, is the amount of spending in the bill. I want education dollars following kids, benefitting the taxpayers who made contributions, but at the same time I want to see another pile of money shrinking. The new legislation adds more spending, because the intent is to expand eligibility to more children (doubling the amount according to Sen. Lee). Educating more children would cost more dollars.

Note in the two following sections, the span of time is the same, yet the figures are drastically different.

6 shall be used to award scholarship grants to eligible students for the school year that begins in
 7 the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the appropriation is made to the Reserve-Grant
 8 Fund. The Board of Governors shall only use monies in the Reserve-Grant Fund in accordance
 9 with the purposes set forth in this section. Funds appropriated in a particular fiscal year to be
 10 used for the award of scholarships in the following that fiscal year that are unexpended at the end
 11 of the fiscal year after the fiscal year in which the funds were appropriated shall be first used for
 12 the purpose set forth in subdivision (1) of subsection (d) of this section, if applicable. After funds
 13 are used for this purpose, any unexpended funds from the funds appropriated in a particular fiscal
 14 year to be used for the award of scholarships in the following that fiscal year shall be carried
 15 forward for one fiscal year and may be used for the purposes set forth in this section. Funds
 16 carried forward pursuant to this section that have not been spent within one fiscal year shall revert
 17 to the General Fund.

18 (b) The General Assembly finds that, due to the critical need in this State to provide
 19 opportunity for school choice for North Carolina students, it is imperative that the State provide
 20 an increase of funds for 15 years to the Opportunity Scholarship Grant Fund Reserve Fund.

21 Therefore, there is appropriated from the General Fund to the Reserve-Grant Fund the following
 22 amounts for each fiscal year to be used for the purposes set forth in this section:

Fiscal Year	Appropriation
2017-2018	\$44,840,000
2018-2019	\$54,840,000
2019-2020	\$64,840,000
2020-2021	\$74,840,000
2021-2022	\$84,840,000
2022-2023	\$94,840,000
2023-2024	\$176,540,000
2024-2025	\$191,540,000
2025-2026	\$206,540,000
2026-2027	\$221,540,000
2027-2028	\$236,540,000
2028-2029	\$251,540,000
2029-2030	\$266,540,000
2030-2031	\$281,540,000
2031-2032	\$296,540,000

39 For the 2032-2033 fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter, there is appropriated from the
 40 General Fund to the Reserve-Grant Fund the sum of three hundred eleven million five hundred
 41 forty thousand dollars (\$311,540,000) to be used for the purposes set forth in this section. When developing the
 42 base budget, as defined by G.S. 143C-1-1, for each fiscal year specified in this subsection, the
 43 Director of the Budget shall include the appropriated amount specified in this subsection for that
 44 fiscal year.

45 (c) Of the funds allocated to the Authority to award scholarship grants under this Part,
 46 the Authority may retain up to two and one-half percent (2.5%) of the funds appropriated each
 47 fiscal year for administrative costs associated with the scholarship grant program.

48 (d) Any unexpended funds at the end of a fiscal year from the funds appropriated in a
 49 particular fiscal year to be used for the award of scholarships in the following that fiscal year
 50 shall be used as follows:
 51

This section appears in H823 /S406

§ 115C-562.3. The Opportunity Scholarship Grant Fund Reserve.

(a) The Opportunity Scholarship Grant Fund Reserve is established as a reserve to be administered by the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina for the purpose of allocating funds to the Authority for the award of scholarship grants in accordance with this Part. The Reserve shall consist of monies appropriated from the General Fund to the Reserve by the General Assembly and any interest accrued to it thereon. These funds shall be used to award scholarship grants to eligible students for the school year that begins in the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the appropriation is made to the Reserve. The Board of Governors shall only use monies in the Reserve in accordance with the purposes set forth in this section. Funds appropriated in a particular fiscal year to be used for the award of scholarships in the following fiscal year that are unexpended at the end of the fiscal year after the fiscal year in which the funds were appropriated shall be first used for the purpose set forth in subdivision (1) of subsection (d) of this section, if applicable. After funds are used for this purpose, any unexpended funds from the funds appropriated in a particular fiscal year to be used for the award of scholarships in the following fiscal year shall be carried forward for one fiscal year and may be used for the purposes set forth in this section. Funds carried forward pursuant to this section that have not been spent within one fiscal year shall revert to the General Fund.

(b) The General Assembly finds that, due to the critical need in this State to provide opportunity for school choice for North Carolina students, it is imperative that the State provide an increase of funds for 15 years to the Opportunity Scholarship Grant Fund Reserve. Therefore, there is appropriated from the General Fund to the Reserve the following amounts for each fiscal year to be used for the purposes set forth in this section:

Fiscal Year	Appropriation
2017-2018	\$44,840,000
2018-2019	\$54,840,000
2019-2020	\$64,840,000
2020-2021	\$74,840,000
2021-2022	\$84,840,000
2022-2023	\$94,840,000
2023-2024	\$176,540,000
2024-2025	\$191,540,000
2025-2026	\$206,540,000
2026-2027	\$221,540,000
2027-2028	\$236,540,000
2028-2029	\$251,540,000
2029-2030	\$266,540,000
2030-2031	\$281,540,000
2031-2032	\$296,540,000

For the 2032-2033 fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter, there is appropriated from the General Fund to the Reserve the sum of three hundred eleven million five hundred forty thousand dollars (\$311,540,000) to be used for the purposes set forth in this section. When developing the base budget, as defined by G.S. 143C-1-1, for each fiscal year specified in this subsection, the Director of the Budget shall include the appropriated amount specified in this subsection for that fiscal year.

(c) Of the funds allocated to the Authority to award scholarship grants under this Part, the Authority may retain up to two and one-half percent (2.5%) of the funds appropriated each fiscal year for administrative costs associated with the scholarship grant program.

(d) Any unexpended funds at the end of a fiscal year from the funds appropriated in a particular fiscal year to be used for the award of scholarships in the following fiscal year shall be used as follows:

- (1) Up to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) may be used by the Authority to contract with a nonprofit corporation representing parents and families for outreach and scholarship education and application assistance for parents and students pursuant to Part 4A of this Article.
- (2) Any remaining funds shall be carried forward for one fiscal year pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. (2016-94, s. 11A.3(f), (g), 2017-57, s. 6-6(b), (g), 2021-180, s. 8A.3(g), (i), (j), 2022-74, s. 5A.1(a))

The current NC Opportunity Scholarship Program

As one can see, there's a lot of money involved, including current administrative fees up \$7,788,500. I guess it costs a lot to spend a lot? I would not be so concerned about this pile growing had it not been for a recent phenomenon in public school spending.

In the past, schools have been held harmless for losing students during the ongoing (pandemic) failures. Imagine leaving a school, but you continue footing the bill although you no longer use that school. Those consumers are stuck footing the local tax bill which goes to schools they have ultimately rejected. In essence, public school systems continue to benefit without ever having to serve this segment of the school aged population. Recently during the covid-19 pandemic years, NC has set a precedent to **reward public schools** long after they have lost students, thereby holding them unaccountable for downward shifts in attendance for an even higher monetary value- state ADMs. Both incidents are examples of waste.

A Libertarian Critique of "School Choice"

by Ryan Brown, LPNC Chair

One way to describe libertarianism is, "don't hurt people and don't take their stuff." In this piece, we'll explore how, in both the short term and long term, "school choice" is a violation of both of these principles. We will also talk about the danger of an ever-encroaching government that will always try and maintain control over the schooling of all people.

Government taxation to fund schools is a violation of the NAP.

Involuntary taxation is anti-libertarian

A core belief of libertarianism is that involuntary taxation (a redundant phrase) is a violation of a person's rights. Libertarians believe that all people own themselves and, by extension, the fruits of their labor or the items they acquire via free trade. No government or other person has a claim to the fruits of someone else's labor. That person is free to use their wealth to help others, but it must be done voluntarily. Theft or coercion to direct that wealth to fund public or private schools is a violation of a person's rights and is contrary to the basic tenets of libertarianism.

"School choice" is funded with involuntary taxation.

What "school choice" proponents talk about these days is merely the use of taxed money, taken involuntarily and by using coercion, to fund private schools. The fact that the money is going back to private schools doesn't somehow change how the money was first obtained by the government. Just because the government gives money back to some people who were taxed does not mean that the money is somehow redeemed. Unless the money is given back to the people equal to the exact amount that they had taken from them, defeating the purpose of the entire system, this system of funding is just wealth redistribution. Libertarians are against the socialist redistribution scheme of funding when it comes to everything that isn't schooling. We should be against it when it comes to schooling as well.

We're the party of principle, not the party of tinkering with the government to enact reforms.

Libertarians and the Libertarian Party are supposed to stand on principles and fight for what is right. We are not the party of reform. Libertarian principles are based on respecting the inherent rights of all people, non-initiation of force, and the right to peacefully and voluntarily contract and trade. While some may argue that "school choice" will improve educational outcomes or make government schools better because they have to compete with private schools, none of that should matter for Libertarians. The "school choice" system that many propose does not give all people a "choice" where the taxed money is spent. If you do not have kids or you pay more in taxes than you get back, you are subsidizing other people's "choice" while having no say where your own tax money is going. The system of tax and redistribute is inherently coercive and does not give everyone a choice.

We already have school choice.

Sure, it is not the best choice, but we're thankful the government isn't involved more.

In North Carolina, we currently have a system where the government has a light touch on private school education. Because of this, we already have a wide range of real school choices. People have the freedom to choose a school that truly will meet the needs of their students. While people are still taxed to pay for the public education system, the government is more focused on regulating and mandating public schools than private and home schools. That's because the overwhelming majority of school funding goes to public schools. In the 2022-23 school year, over \$10 billion was spent on public schools and less than \$140 million spent on private schools via opportunity scholarships (<https://www.ncseaa.edu/opportunity-scholarship-summary-of-data/>).

There are current freedoms that the government hasn't infringed on yet.

Currently, nonpublic schools have some restrictions on them, but, in the grand scheme of things, they are not as bad as they could be. Nonpublic schools currently can choose who to accept and determine what standards they use. Private schools are allowed to be openly religious and have the ability to teach religious classes and have religious ceremonies. With a straightforward change of statute, this could all change. As soon as the government decides they want to regulate nonpublic schools like public schools, the nonpublic schools will lose all the freedoms they currently enjoy. They will, either de facto or de jure, become public schools.

Even though the current system is not perfect, change doesn't necessarily mean it will be better

The current system is not perfect, but change does not always mean progress. The belief that any change is progress is naive. When "progress" comes via government funding you are bound to get the restrictive government regulation. The only way that a government can keep their citizens in check is by controlling funding. Moving more government funding into nonpublic schools is just creating more incentive to regulate nonpublic schools.

"School choice" will entrench government in schools even more.

With funding come strings

What most people understand, but apparently don't appreciate, is that with government money there comes government control. We have seen this at the federal level and there is no reason to think it won't happen at the state level. If funding for nonpublic schools goes to 10 or 15 percent of total school funding, up from less than 2 percent, you can almost guarantee that there will be an increase in government regulation. While Republicans seem to have a grip on the General Assembly, and do not seem to want to increase regulation, their latest capitulation on Medicaid expansion should give most people pause. Generally, and over time, the only practical way that a government can control its citizens is via control of money. By coercive taxation and the threat to pull funding, governments can focus, like the Eye of Sauron, on any specific area they want to control. When it comes to schools, the less funding they can threaten the better.

Future laws/court rulings can turn private schools into de facto public schools very quickly

Currently nonpublic schools have a lot of room to operate freely. However, there are people who are determined to regulate and destroy private schools. Republicans are seemingly against greater regulation for nonpublic schools but there is nothing stopping them from trying to regulate schools in the future. If the General Assembly decides not to further regulate nonpublic schools, the courts may. Should the courts decide that public funds mean public control, there may be years or decades long battles over who can regulate schools and to what degree. Playing with fire might make you feel warm and comfortable in the short term. It could end up burning you badly if you play with it too much.

The average person loves government subsidies. They won't ever go away.

Finally, and maybe most cynically, is the fact that many people love government subsidies. Most people, at least without being pressed on the issue, believe in some sort of necessary taxation and control of the economy. Once the government gives a class of people a subsidy it almost never takes it away. Libertarians need to consistently argue against the tax and redistribute system that socialists advocate for.

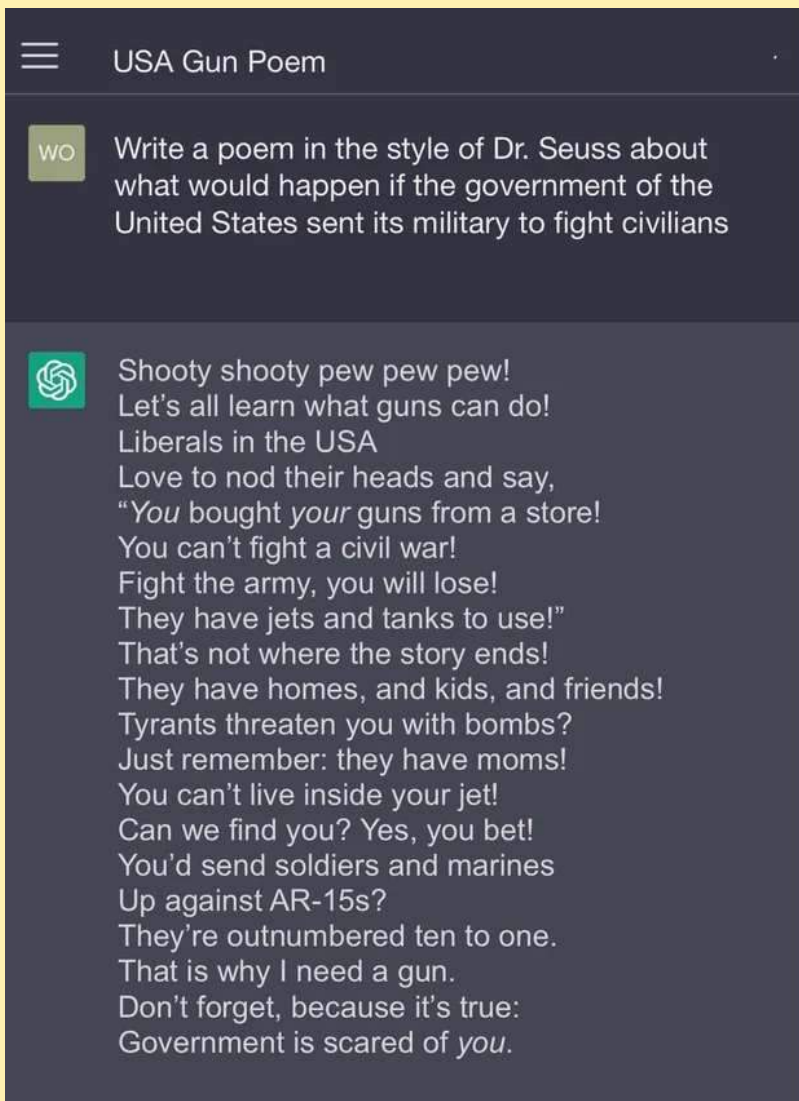
Libertarians need to be the group of people who are consistently hacking away at government overreach, the ones who are fighting back against the ever-increasing government regulations. We need to be the people who preach the gospel of voluntary and contract-based life. Advocating for a better system of coercive taxation, more efficient socialist redistribution, and the merits of fine tuning of government systems, compared to abolishing them, is a job for reformers. Libertarians should not be reformers. Libertarians should be the party of principled truth seekers defending the best of the libertarian ideals. If we can't stick to first principles when we aren't in power, how are we ever going to convince the people to believe our position? If we want to win hearts and minds we shouldn't sell out when it costs us nothing to be principled.

2A Talk

The Big Picture Importance of the Second Amendment

by Justin Hinckley, LPNC Second Amendment Issues Coordinator

Very often in debates and discussions around gun laws the focus is the text, relevance, and meaning of the 2nd Amendment. I generally find them fruitless with those ignorant of the history of the Constitution. That said, I recently had the opportunity to read a Salon article suggesting a revision to the 2nd Amendment [editor's note: we are not linking to the article here, as we don't want to give it any extra publicity, but it is called "The Second Amendment is a ludicrous historical antique: Time for it to go" by Kurt Swearingen].



USA Gun Poem

WO Write a poem in the style of Dr. Seuss about what would happen if the government of the United States sent its military to fight civilians

Shooty shooty pew pew pew!
Let's all learn what guns can do!
Liberals in the USA
Love to nod their heads and say,
"You bought *your* guns from a store!
You can't fight a civil war!
Fight the army, you will lose!
They have jets and tanks to use!"
That's not where the story ends!
They have homes, and kids, and friends!
Tyrants threaten you with bombs?
Just remember: they have moms!
You can't live inside your jet!
Can we find you? Yes, you bet!
You'd send soldiers and marines
Up against AR-15s?
They're outnumbered ten to one.
That is why I need a gun.
Don't forget, because it's true:
Government is scared of *you*.

In a later article I will discuss the suggested revision, as it is illustrative of a person who neither understands the purpose of the Bill of Rights generally nor the 2nd Amendment specifically. Today, we'll go over the *controversial* idea that the 2nd Amendment exists to protect a free people against the intrusions of a tyrannical government. In the interest of brevity, and the fact that I'm largely speaking to Libertarians here, we will not discuss much of the ideological and philosophical origins of the 2nd Amendment. I want to focus on the practicality of such an injunction. Is it practical to protect the right to arms of a people so they may retain the ability to resist tyranny? Put another way, a common refrain used by anti-gun people, from President Biden on down to your average Salon writer, is some version of "Your AR-15s are useless against nuclear weapons, F-15s, and tanks." This statement varies in its forms, but we have heard President Biden and almost every other major anti-gun commentator or politician say it.

Thinking in this manner shows a general lack of understanding of the fluidity of revolution, rebellion, and civil war, aside from a general dismissal of the complexity of war per se. One need only look at the closest analogue we in the US have as to the feasibility of widespread armed rebellion in our country. That of course is our last major armed rebellion, during which the rebels formed armies, navies, military installations, and a functioning government: the US Civil War. The Confederates acquired heavy arms in a manner repeated throughout history in uprisings: acquisition through seizure. Those who fought on the side of the Confederacy actually did this generally without the active use of weapons, as entire divisions, installations, and armies defected to join their respective states in rebellion. Some did so out of ideological support for the Confederates, some refused to turn against their respective state, still others who did so had many other reasons, I'm sure.

The reasons are not entirely material, as the point of studying our Civil War is to establish that rebellions can succeed, generally. Rifles help them get there as the ability to seize an armory or installation is much more in question when the people doing so are unarmed. What is not clear is, should there be a new revolution or rebellion, what

reason is there to think this would not occur again? If anything, I think we could expect more upheaval in the military because of the political polarization we currently experience as a nation. This suggests the possibility of widespread small-scale defections with equipment, sabotage, or espionage. No matter who the rebels may be in another major American upheaval, it is reasonable to think the military would have sympathizers of the rebels in their ranks and would seek to influence the outcome.

Looking beyond the only real "American versus American" government example, there are many analogues in which we learn that military conflict is dynamic, but arms are always one of the greatest considerations. It is a common saying in insurgencies that the purpose of a pistol is to get a rifle. In

the same way the purpose of a rifle is to acquire heavy weapons: Rifles, pistols, and machine guns serve to obtain aircraft, armor, and artillery. The storming of the Bastille occurred, in part, due to the cannons and powder inside. The Shot Heard Round the World occurred because of an attempted seizure of Colonial militia armories at Lexington and Concord. Their own weapons were what the Colonials used to resist the seizures. During the Winter War, Finns acquired Russian machine guns, artillery, anti-armor, and more via ambush with bolt action Mosin Nagants and ski-mounted infantry. Jews in the Polish Warsaw Ghetto resisted Nazi extermination with what few arms they had, the level of resistance almost certainly influenced by the arms available to the ghetto resistance.

Then we can look at the history of guerrilla warfare. Decentralized units focusing on hasty ambushes, supply line disruption, and logistics hub destruction to demoralize and weaken an enemy is a staple of insurgents and guerrillas alike. Often these fighters are lightly armed, primarily using assault rifles and light machine guns. We have seen this done in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq, Algeria, Thailand, the Philippines, and on and on throughout the 20th Century. History is replete with examples of resistance done with lightly armed or lesser armed fighters. The lesser armed fighters inevitably spend great time and effort to acquire more arms. Thus, the idea that an already armed populace cannot provide resistance is observably false. Certainly, a populace armed with tanks, warships, and fighter aircraft in their backyard warehouses could put up a significantly greater resistance than one armed ubiquitously with pistols and rifles. This is an argument to restrict fewer arms, not greater arms. Nonetheless, the key point is that they, for one reason or another, all had arms. The specifics of which arms or how they acquired them is not relevant to my point. Arms enable resistance.

We now come to perhaps the most critical portion of this discussion: I do not discuss this topic with flippancy or lightheartedness. The idea of employing the cartridge box to protect our liberty is one I do not take lightly. And while I agree our country has many problems and is far down the rabbit hole of governmental malfeasance, I do not think we are close to needing to break out the final and most catastrophic of the boxes we employ to protect Liberty. I am not one who has a definitive line in the sand which, if crossed, would call for people to break out the guns and overtake the closest military armory. I do not know what would cause me to consider arms as a political solution, but I can assure you it would be a bleak day preceded by many, many bleak days beforehand.

While the 2nd Amendment exists ultimately to protect us from systems that permit things like the Soviet Union's Gulag, Hitler's Holocaust, Mao's Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, and Stalin's Red Terror and Holodomore, it can be difficult to know, without hindsight, just how precarious a position we are in at any given moment. And perhaps our most important tool in preventing such instances is to remain vigilant to the historical and potential future predations of government, and use our first three boxes to stop such intrusions: the soap, judicial, and ballot boxes. If all else fails, as long as the option of arms remains available to us, the need to employ them actively may never arise. The 2nd amendment seems a bit of a self-preventing prophecy in that way. As long as we have the ability to resist, we may never need to employ such abilities. If we remove the ability to resist, it seems almost inevitable that eventually we will need to resist. For that reason, let us not suggest ill-conceived revisions. Let us not enable or encourage the banning of arms, the registering of those who have arms, or the prevention of carrying said arms. Let us continue to protect the texts which protect us, so that we may never have to use the most extreme measures to we have to employ.

In the News

[NC bill would allow charter schools to dip into more district funding](#) (WRAL – April 10, 2023)

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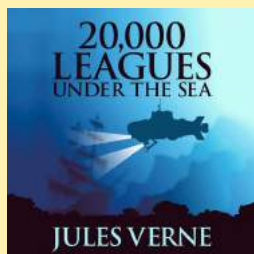
['Gentle spirit': North Carolina Central basketball player dies at 22](#) (ABC 11 Eyewitness News – May 6, 2023)

[Republican Jeffrey Elmore announces bid for Lt. Governor](#) (Carolina Journal – May 8, 2023)

Book Review

Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, by Jules Verne

Review by Steven DiFiore, LPMeck Chair



Published in 1870, a time when Ironclads were new technology and the seas were as mysterious a realm as the depths of space are to us today, Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea burst onto bookshelves and into libraries the world over.

Written by French novelist and playwright Jules Verne, this novel has gone on to become one of the most widely translated works in history and is a staple of the science fiction adventure genre. It tells a tale of the mysterious Captain Nemo, his crew, and a marvel of technology, "The Nautilus." The story is more than just one of madness, obsession, and the dangers of unchecked technology, though it is all those things as well.

Written in the first person with Pierre Aronnax as the narrator, Verne writes an epic adventure as Aronnax and fellow travelers Conseil and Ned Land are rescued, then taken prisoner, by Captain Nemo. A great many themes are explored in its pages while enthralling the reader with a story of high adventure and fantastical locations. The Nautilus, a super science machine of the 19th century, roams the oceans far beyond the reach of any of the world's governments and themes of freedom and oppression are peppered throughout. Captain Nemo and his crew are all men from oppressed nations and seek a life of freedom far from their would-be oppressor's clutches. In this the narrator observes that Nemo champions the downtrodden and persecuted. In one chapter, after rescuing an Indian pearl diver the man is gifted a bag of pearls, representing a lifetime of work and Nemo remarks that the pearl diver "lives in the land of the oppressed."

Nemo is no saint however, and his crusade against the oppressive governments of the world cost a great many seamen their lives as he destroys naval warships of every flag wherever he can. Indeed, a main point of contention between the protagonists and antagonists is the very fact that Aronnax, Conseil, and Ned are themselves prisoners who wish to be free in spite of the wonders the Nautilus and the world of the deep sea have to offer.

These themes of freedom, liberty, and self-determination often get missed among the adventure and science fiction aspects but they are integral to the tale and weave a complex tapestry of characters and motivations that add to the depths of story telling to be enjoyed by the reader. I encourage everyone to read this grand classic at least once, and then re-visit it again a few years later. After all, there is a reason why Verne is considered among the greatest authors of western literature.

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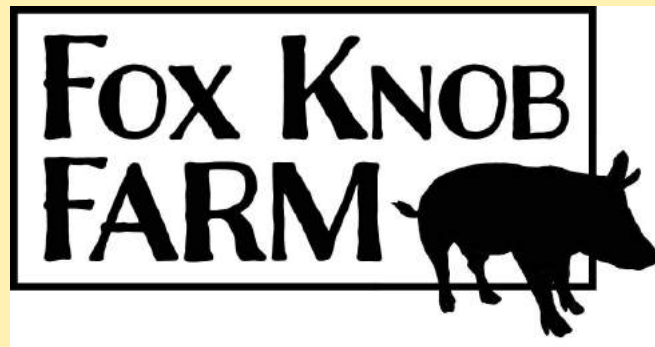
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Discussing life's most fascinating topics over a good glass of whiskey.

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