

Running for Public Office Does Not Work: Why “Infiltrating the State” is Foolish

thelastbastille.wordpress.com/2015/07/09/running-for-public-office-does-not-work-why-infiltrating-the-state-is-foolish/

People feel indescribably trapped by this horrendous system that grinds us down, and it does so primarily by its very irrationality. Despite all the rhetoric you may hear about the [practicality of elections](#), this is little else than [badly constructed sophistry](#) whose purpose is to suck American dissidents right back into the coercive government structure by increasing their opportunity costs. Failure to objectively judge the dangers inherent within [the political means of making money](#) reinforces the hapless citizenry’s Stockholm Syndrome with the State.

All anyone has to do, in order to determine the efficacy of trying to “infiltrate the State” with the explicit goal of either shrinking or abolishing it, is to discover how many elections have been won and how many laws have been repealed by those who claim to value individual liberty. Remember, all [Hitchens’ razor](#) demands is that the claim maker substantiate their claims with evidence; it is *not* incumbent on any critics, logically, to provide evidence debunking the claims in question (which would be attempting to prove a negative). Unfortunately for those who advocate running for public office as a viable technique for securing liberty, I have seen no evidence supporting their baseless assertions.



History is valuable because it reminds the future about the mistakes of the past, in the hope that they can learn a lesson or two from them. The [2004 “Libertarian” Party \(LP\) presidential debate](#) between [Gary Nolan](#), [Michael Badnarick](#) (the author of [Good to be King](#)), and [Aaron Russo](#), while certainly entertaining, did not result in any electoral wins. Despite having [ballot access in 49 of the several states](#), Badnarick, as the LP’s presidential nominee, still failed to win the U.S. Presidency, ultimately receiving [0.32% of the popular vote](#), and more importantly, *none* from the [Electoral College](#) (whose votes are required by the 1787 federal Constitution for the presidency).

Christopher Cantwell ran against [Tim Bishop](#) for his seat in the House of Representatives for New York’s first congressional district, back in 2010. Cantwell was joined by his campaign manager, Gary Donoyan, for an interview with Joseph Dobrian for the [December 10th, 2009 broadcast of Hardfire](#), which is the **only** time I’ve ever seen Cantwell wear a suit and tie. His first venture into standup comedy took place at the [LibertyFest NYC on September 10th of 2011](#), where he was introduced as a former [aspiring politician](#); needless to say, Cantwell failed to beat Bishop.

Ron Paul ran three presidential campaigns, first in [1988](#), then [2008](#), and finally in [2012](#). As the LP

nominee in '88, Dr. Paul had ballot access in 46 of the several states and he received 0.47% of the popular vote; twenty years later in '08, Dr. Paul failed to gain the GOP nomination, mainly because he only managed to get 1 – 2% of the delegates to pledge to him, and due to the shenanigans of the GOP at Tampa three years ago, Dr. Paul only got **8.31%** of the vote for the party's nomination. The receipts for these campaigns came out thusly:

- 1988: \$2,000,000
- 2008: \$28,100,000
- 2012: \$40,947,039

Despite both the financial and opportunity costs incurred by Ron Paul's supporters, academics like Walter Block stubbornly insist on the political means of making money as being *somehow* viable to the cause of liberty. As Dr. Block said on [The Lew Rockwell Show](#), episode 296, broadcasted on July 27th of 2012:

“How do we expect to win? The only way we can expect to win and bring about a libertarian society is to have a lot of libertarians. And how do you get a lot of libertarians? Well, the vehicle of the political process. I think Ron Paul has empirically demonstrated this, so, I don't want to jettison the political process because we can use it as a means, as a vehicle, as Ron Paul has shown, to promote liberty, even though the thing itself is rotten to the core, as you [Lew Rockwell] point out.”

If Dr. Block means that running for public office is useful as a vehicle for raising campaign contributions, then I most certainly agree with him on that one, for as Penny Freeman told Adam Kokesh a month earlier, Dr. Paul's [portfolio has definitely grown](#), because of his presidential campaigns. Interestingly enough, Dr. Paul himself had something to say about the efficacy of his time in public office during his [farewell address to Congress](#):

*“In many ways, according to conventional wisdom, my off-and-on career in Congress, from 1976 to 2012, accomplished very little. No named legislation, no named federal buildings or highways — thank goodness. **In spite of my efforts, the government has grown exponentially, taxes remain excessive, and the prolific increase of incomprehensible regulations continues. Wars are constant and pursued without Congressional declaration, deficits rise to the sky, poverty is rampant and dependency on the federal government is now worse than any time in our history...** I have come to one firm conviction after these many years of trying to figure out ‘the plain truth of things.’ The best chance for achieving peace and prosperity, for the maximum number of people world-wide, is to pursue the cause of LIBERTY.” [emphasis added]*

Right there, Dr. Paul is directly contradicting what Dr. Block had said just four months earlier. How can

infiltrating the State by winning elections and repealing laws be effective in securing liberty if your top champion explicitly stated just how much of a failure he was *doing just that* over the course of 36 years?

Some people have asserted, time and again, that it doesn't matter whether running for office actually works to promote the cause of liberty, because it's their "right" to run such campaigns in the first place.

Constitutionally speaking, the federal one is silent on this, although it does mention the **eligibility** for the presidency in [Art. II § 1 cl. 5](#), as well as for representatives and senators in [Art. I § 2 cl. 2](#) & [Art. I § 3 cl. 3](#), respectively; therefore, the 10th Amendment takes effect. Similarly, the 1876 Texas Constitution appears equally silent on the alleged "right" to run for office, at most stating which public offices are constitutionally established, and at times mentioning the length a citizen may hold such offices. Honestly, the only constitution I am aware of that enumerates a "right" to run for office is, quite literally, the 1972 [Socialist Constitution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea](#). Article 66 says:

"All citizens who have reached the age of 17 have the right to elect and to be elected, irrespective of sex, race, occupation, length of residence, property status, education, party affiliation, political views or religion. Citizens serving in the armed forces also have the right to elect and to be elected. A person who has been disenfranchised by a Court decision and a person legally certified insane do not have the right to elect or to be elected."

If that sounds good to you, you might want to first watch [PBS' Frontline broadcast on January 14th of 2014](#) in order to gain some perspective.

Given that running for public office might as well be just another government program, then what are the rules imposed by the State? Limiting ourselves to only Texas provides a wealth of information, courtesy of both the Texas Secretary of State's [Qualifications for Office](#) webpage and the [Texas Election Code](#), which I will overview briefly now. Texas Election Code § 141.001 says that a candidate must be a United States citizen, 18 years old or older, have resided in Texas for a year, to *not* have been legally determined to be either partially or totally mentally incapacitated, and to satisfy any other eligibility requirements prescribed by law for the office being sought.

But wait, there's more! Election Code § 141.031 says that the candidate must apply for a place on the ballot, essentially making what appears to be an affidavit, and § 141.035 says that the application and "an accompanying petition" is public information immediately upon filing. Independent (that is, nonpartisan) candidates are required by § 142.002 to make a declaration of intent to run, § 142.004 says that in addition to the application from § 141.031, an independent candidate must also file a petition to satisfy § 141.062.

Probably the simplest location for discovering what is required of candidates is to look at the [Independent Candidates](#) and [Write-In Candidates](#) webpages, courtesy of the Texas Secretary of State. If you are running as an independent candidate for a district, county or precinct office, then for your petition you must collect 500 signatures or 5% of the total vote, whichever is lesser, pursuant to § 142.007. For write-in candidates, they must collect a somewhat similar proportion of signatures, unless they prefer to pay a filing fee in lieu of getting signatures, which could range anywhere from \$375 – \$3,750, depending upon office being sought and population of a given electorate, pursuant to §§ 146.023(b), 146.0232, & 172.025; of course, this is different for a candidate in a primary where the filing fee ranges from \$300 – \$1,500 depending on the office, pursuant to § 172.024.

American patriots, I suspect, are not going to seriously plow through all the legal jargon in order to understand how to get their militiamen elected as county sheriffs just in time for the [2016 elections](#) next year. All that the Texas Constitution has to say about county sheriffs is that they are elected every 4 years (Art. V § 23), they double as tax collectors in counties under a population of 10,000 (Art. XVI § 61), they receive free medical services paid for by the Texas government (Art. III § 52e), and, like all other elected and appointed officials, sheriffs take an oath not only to the Texas Constitution, but also the federal one as well (Art. XVI § 1).

I guess that explains why the Texas government left [KC Massey to rot in solitary](#), despite the [conflict of laws](#). So much for “[oath-keeping](#)” and “[constitutional sheriffs](#),” especially considering the [fake drone attack retreat](#) during last year’s Bundy Affair, despite the [ridiculous excuses offered later](#). To paraphrase [Matthew 6:24](#), you can’t serve two masters, but that didn’t bother the speakers none at the [Come & Take It! rally in San Antonio](#), back on October 19th of 2013.

Should you feel baffled, at this point, as to the sheer irrational complexity of running for public office, you are certainly not alone. Naomi Wolf mentioned in her book, [Give Me Liberty](#), about how her socially democratic populist expectations were just crushed by the sheer weight of bureaucracy:

“I had told the young woman in Wisconsin to run for city council. Now I needed to see if I knew how to run myself and if I could help other people run. But I found that not only was usable information about democracy disappearing, so were the entry points to citizen leadership. I accumulated a stack of research materials from all the main resources a citizen would plausibly turn to if he or she wanted to run for office: state and city government, governors’ offices, Congress, county sources, and so on. I kept having a bizarre intellectual experience... [t]here is no way to know how to get one of those seats for yourself if you are a citizen – no way to compete fairly with the donors, cronies, members of special interests, lovers, business colleagues, or other people filling the seats that an American citizen should have free and fair and equal access to.”

She went on to complain that there are no idiot-proof tutorials about how to become an elected ruler. Ironically, she discovered how enlisting in the federal U.S. Army was amazingly user-friendly:

“When I had knocked on the door to this avenue of my possible public service, I found that the entry point could not have been clearer, better guided, or better designed to help me through the process...[i]n parting, I received several gifts. I received a number of illustrated brochures... I received a free DVD... I also got a coffee mug.”

Wolf presumes that **democractic** governments should go out of their way to lower the barriers to entry for citizens to directly contest the seats of incumbents. She fails to understand that this is exactly how the system is designed to work. Because [the State](#) is intrinsically a violently (anti-propertarian) coercive

monopoly, it establishes barriers to entry in order to entrench those who imagine themselves to be our rulers upon their hallucinatory thrones. To paraphrase John Rockefeller, [competition is sinful](#).

What are the contemporary attitudes of running for public office? Free Keene's [Ian Bernard](#) is very much in favor of other people running for local (that is, municipal or county) offices, such as when he praised Tim O'Flaherty's electoral win in Manchester's Ward 5 as an oxymoronic [anarchist politician](#). By contrast, [Liberate RVA](#), from what I can tell, has been staunchly against popular electoral voting, which implies seeking political office as well. In 2007, [Stefan Molyneux argued why infiltrating the State is foolish](#):

*"Why don't you join the Mafia, and turn them around? Turn them into the United Way, turn them into a nice group, or **at least**, get them to give up significant portions of their business. Join the Mafia, get them to give up half their gambling control, half their control of the prostitution rings, get them to give up half of their shakedowns, and half of their drug trade. Or a third. Or 10%! You can do that, and you will learn enormously valuable lessons about how to actually go about changing an institution, which everybody still considers moral and which has a huge and massive army. [***chuckles***] Do you see why it looks a little funny, I mean seriously, do you see why it looks a little bit funny for people to say, as one guy did, 'Oh no, you see, Ron Paul, he's going to make the world better and safer by closing down all the army bases, ending the war in Iraq, and bringing the military home.' If you know how to control and minimize the biggest army the world has ever seen, then surely, infiltrating the Mafia and turning it around should be **nothing** to you. It should be a weekend's work."*

Molyneux described earlier in his vlog that the ability to infiltrate any organization and then turn it completely against its own membership has not been demonstrated to be feasible by reformists. If the LP's aspiring politicians do not possess the ability to infiltrate the KKK and turn it into the NAACP, then why would anyone assume they can infiltrate the State in order to turn it against itself by abolishing, or at least, shrinking it? I think the empirical record, as well as Molyneux's cogent reasoning debunking this nonsense, should put to rest this silly advocacy that says dissidents should run for office.

Reformists who advocate for "liberty-minded candidates" to run for office willfully ignore electoral history, and they know even less about the law. If Fred Rodell was correct in saying that [the law is a racket](#), then that slogan automatically debunks the viability of infiltrating the State by running for office *by itself*, simply because the only good reason for dissidents to become politicians is to repeal as many laws as humanly possible. If nobody showed up to vote, would there still be an election? If so, then the problem here is that those running for office are inherently relying on [voter turnout](#) in order to infiltrate the State.

Political processes don't matter in the final equation, despite the empty bleating from reformists like Naomi Wolf and Walter Block. What does matter is *enforcement*. If the legislature passed a bill into law, and the police don't enforce it, then what relevance does it have to your life in any real practical way?

In terms of "getting the message out," political parties and running for office are, in fact, terribly ineffective ways to go about do so. Much better alternatives are educational organizations, such as the [International Society for Individual Liberty](#) and the [Foundation for Economic Education](#). Vloggers such as [Stefan Molyneux](#) and [Eric English](#), both of whom started their respective channels in August of 2006, have gotten over 58 million and 5 million total videos views, respectively. Since reformists themselves frequently use the alternative media for their own publicity, all I'm asking for, from them, is to have a minimum degree of

ends-means consistency, particularly in light of the fact that they are not totally adverse to the economic means of making money.

Truth be told, I wouldn't be surprised if the advocates of running for public office only did so because they honestly don't know what else to do that would be more effective in terms of securing their liberties. Maybe if they were to cultivate a sense of patience, they would begin to understand the wisdom inherent in [role-playing police interrogations](#), celebrating [freedom holidays](#), and [reclaiming unclaimed property](#). Until such time they give up working within the system, reformists will simply spin around endlessly in circles with no solutions, no real options, and no foreseeable way off the [carousel of carnivores](#).