

Republican Liberty

Free Enterprise, Individual Freedom & Limited Government

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www.rlc.org

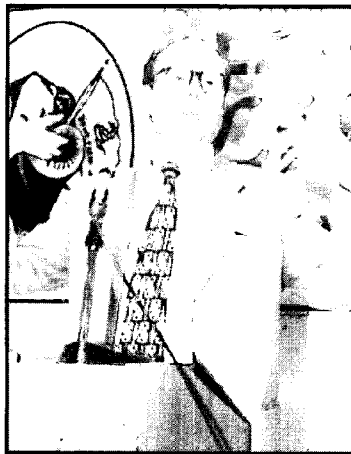
Vol. X, No. III

“This Time, I’m Going to Win!” Sabrin’s NJ Senate Campaign Gains Traction

by Clifford F. Thies

On Jan. 15, Murray Sabrin, the 1997 Libertarian Party candidate for governor of New Jersey, reregistered as a Republican at the Board of Elections in Hackensack.

In spite of a winter storm that shut down most of the Northeast, the event was covered by the New Jersey Network, a statewide cable TV news channel and several daily newspapers. Immediately, the state was abuzz with the possibility of a re-match of the '97 campaign, this time with Murray and liberal Republican Governor Christine Todd Whitman vying for the GOP nomination for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by the retirement of Democrat Frank



Lautenberg.

"The difference between these two campaigns," says Murray at one after another campaign stop, "is that this time, I'm going to win."

On paper, the task of wresting the nomination from a sitting governor seems daunting. We can only assume that Gov. Whitman will have the support of the entire Republican establishment and enough money to choke an elephant. But the fact is she is completely out of touch with the rank-and-file of the Republican Party, whether the issue is taxes, gun control, school choice, affirmative action or abortion.

(Continued on page 3)

Rep. Paul, 30 Others, File Suit Against Clinton’s War

A bipartisan group of 31 members of Congress, including U.S. Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX), filed a lawsuit on Friday, April 30, in federal court against President Bill Clinton for violating both the U.S. Constitution and the 1973 War Powers Resolution with regard to Yugoslavia. (A decision was imminent at presstime).

Rep. Paul has led Congress in the opposing the unconstitutional military action, introducing the first legislation to stop the measure early in this Congress, and speaking against it last year.

"This president has violated the law and he must be taken to task," said Rep. Paul. "It is a shame that Congress has not done more to stop the president from this destructive course. So it is therefore incumbent upon us to resort to the courts to force Mr. Clinton to follow his Oath of Office to uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States."

The lawsuit specifically states that the president violated Section 1, Article 8, Clause 11, of the U.S. Constitution by engaging in war without the declaration of such from Congress. The suit also notes that the president violated the 1973 War Powers Resolution for failing to officially report to Congress on his aggressive actions against Yugoslavia within the mandated 48 hours.

The suit seeks a declaratory judgment from the court, stating that the president has violated both the U.S. Constitution and the War Powers Resolution. The plaintiffs ask the court to order the president to end hostilities by May 25 and withdrawn troops no later

than June 24.

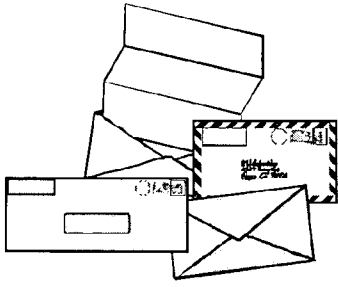
"For more than 50 years, presidents have engaged in foreign adventurism at the cost of American lives without regard for the Constitution. But for the first time we have a president who not only refuses to acknowledge the Constitution, but also the War Powers Resolution which -- in my opinion -- improperly transferred constitutionally non-delegable powers from the legislative to executive branch," said Rep. Paul. "Apparently this president thinks he is king, for in our representative democracy no man is given the power to unilaterally commit troops to battle without the express authorization of the people's representatives in Congress."

Rep. Paul is joined in the suit by (partial list): Tom Campbell (R-CA), Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD), Bob Barr (R-GA), Dan Burton (R-IN), Philip

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Feedback

Stop The War Now!

God Bless the RLC for taking such a strong stand in opposition to Clinton's war in Yugoslavia. This conflict is truly Clinton's personal war on the Constitution, national security, the taxpayer and the innocent families that perish each night under Clinton's cowardly bombs.

Ending this war must continue to be priority number one for the RLC. I urge all RLCers to visit www.stophthewarnow.com and send your Congress Member the email petition. Also, you can check www.antiwar.com for daily reports on the war.

Rupert Mathis
Merrick, NY

See You in 2000...

Thank you for providing the opportunity to participate in the 1998 Republican Liberty Caucus national convention. I thoroughly enjoyed serving on the panel and found the convention to be fun, interesting and worthwhile.

Rep. Dave Jaye
R-Macomb County, MI

There's Hope for the GOP

Frankly, I have been so disgusted with the recent performance of the Republicans that I no longer saw any point in continuing my support. Then I read your inspiring newsletter and felt that perhaps

Republican Liberty

Editor: **Philip Blumel**

Senior Editor: **Mike Holmes**

Contributing Editors: **Clifford Thies, Thomas D. Walls and T. Franklin Harris.** Contributing Writers: **Fred Stein, Laura Kotelman, Kevin Southwick, Laura Crockett-Gordon and Matt McDonald.**

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the dream is still alive, that despite predators like Nixon and marauders like Clinton there is still a reason to fight on.

James C. Danly Jr.
London, England

RLC, Ron Paul Encouraging

I am often very disappointed by the Republican Party's lack of initiative and vision. As you stated in a recent RLC letter, why should Republicans be rewarded "for not cutting my taxes and for not getting the government off my back?"

I agree. Yet I was very pleased to see the reelection of Rep. Ron Paul. I am hereby renewing my membership in the RLC.

Please continue to send this message to Republican candidates: Don't run for office as a libertarian or libertarian conservative and then compromise with liberals after the election.

William H. Tucker
Ferguson, MO

We are Winning!

Despite the war criminal in the White House, we are winning the intellectual battle for liberty. Social Security privatization is a presidential platform plank -- and not just by a minor party. School vouchers are winning around the country. Libertarian ideas are coming to the fore; now we need more RLC-type Republicans in office to implement them.

Sandy Levy
Alexandria, VA

Paul vs. War...from page 1

Crane (R-IL), John Cooksey (R-LA), Walter Jones (R-NC), Donald Manzullo (R-IL), Charlie Norwood (R-GA), Thomas Petri (R-WI), Marshall Sanford (R-SC), Joe Scarborough (R-FL), Bob Schaffer (R-CO), and Thomas Tancredo (R-CO). The members have legal standing in the suit because the president's actions usurped Congress' constitutional and legal rights to declare war and provide oversight.

"This president is putting American soldiers, and indeed all Americans, in danger by engaging in this reckless action," said Rep. Paul. "We must not allow this or any president to declare themselves above the law." Congress voted in late April 427-2 against a declaration of war with Yugoslavia.

Murray Sabrin...from page 1

This race has the potential to be a classic "limousine liberal" versus grass-roots conservative contest. In fact, Murray's primary campaign slogan is "the real Republican." The problem, of course, will be to put together the money and organization needed to wage a credible campaign.

Following Murray's reregistration, an exploratory committee was formed, with Frank Reick, president of Flouramics, chairing the finance committee. In March, the committee met again. At the March meeting, Scott Peloquin was named executive director of the finance committee; and his wife, Christine Peloquin, volunteer coordinator (Cpeloquin@home.com). Robert Sibi was penciled-in as scheduler.

Since then, several county coordinators have been appointed, and the committee expects to have a coordinator for each of the state's 21 counties by Aug. 6, which date marks the 50th anniversary of Murray's arrival in America, in the arms of his mother, as a postwar refugee, and on which date Murray will make his formal announcement. In addition, several people have been added to the finance committee.

On March 13, Murray had his first "make-or-break" event. On that date he spoke at the New Jersey Right to Life convention, right after Alan Keyes. Could the committee mobilize the volunteers to work the crowd? And, would the mostly Catholic audience warm-up to Murray and his quest to seek the Republican nomination?

The first question was answered in the affirmative, as nearly a dozen volunteers were assembled to plump for Murray. "Last year," Murray started out, "I said my mission is to explain Why Libertarians Should be Pro-Life. This year, my new mission is to explain Why Jews Should be Pro-Life."

The crowd went wild. Afterward, keynote speaker Alan Keyes told Murray that he considered himself to be a libertarian, and offered to help Murray in his campaign.

Two weeks later, on March 30, Murray spoke to the College Republicans at Rutgers University, where he received his Ph.D. in economics. He told the audience, attended by the media and reporters from throughout the state, that he would announce his candidacy on Aug. 6. Afterwards, we went to dinner, and several members offered to be volunteers in the upcoming campaign.

With these successes, media coverage began to increase. On March 31, an article appeared in the Newark Star Ledger, the state's largest newspaper, "Ex-candidate Sabrin may face Whitman again - in Senate Race." On April 4, the *New York Times* ran a piece in the Sunday New Jersey section, "Inviting Himself to the Party."

In mid-April, Murray was on Bob Grant's talk radio show, the biggest in the New York City market. Also in mid-April, Murray appeared on *Inside Trenton*, on New Jersey public television, on the topic of the Governor's property tax rebate program. Murray was joined by the Assembly majority leader who introduced the bill, and former Gov. Jim Florio's communications director.

In the meantime, the exploratory committee was busy raising money. By early May, the committee had raised about \$80,000 from mailings (including Murray's '97 gubernatorial list and several lists of conservative Republicans), personal solicitations and other sources.

The crowd went wild! Afterward, keynote speaker Alan Keyes told Murray that he considered himself to be a libertarian, and offered to help Murray in his campaign.

The committee also hired its first full-time employee, Tim Wierzbicki (tjwybyk@aol.com). Tim is a Rutgers University journalism grad and formerly worked for the *Star Ledger*. The committee expects to have a full-time campaign manager by the summer.

The month of April was another busy month. On the 23rd, Murray participated in the 10th anniversary of the Center for the Defense of Life. He was introduced and received enthusiastically by the crowd. Without a doubt, the pro-life movement will be a strong pillar of Murray's campaign. Other groups include small business, gun owners and young Republicans. On the 29th, Murray attended the annual dinner of the Family Policy Council. Again he was introduced by the host who made a point that he is the pro-life candidate in the Republican primary next year. The crowd applauded loudly. Syndicated columnist Cal Thomas was the keynote speaker and said "it was

nice being in New Jersey where you have an almost Republican governor."

Some people mistakenly believe Gov. Whitman is the only candidate who can capture the New Jersey Senate seat for the Republicans next year. The reason this is not true is because of third-party siphoning-off. Gov. Whitman is so far to the left, she is sure to attract a third-party candidate. Last time, she won 47 to 46 percent, with Murray as a pro-life Libertarian picking up 6 points and a Conservative Party candidate picking up 1 point. Next time, if she is the GOP nominee, who knows how many votes she will lose to third-party siphoning-off, especially since popular talk radio host Bob Grant says he is prepared to enter the race as an independent.

Early in the year, Bob Grant was toying with the idea of seeking the New Jersey Libertarian Party nomination for the U.S. Senate. When the word got back to Bob Grant that a not insignificant number of members of the New Jersey Libertarian Party were prepared to block his nomination, he let it be known that he would run, instead, as an independent. This would, of course, hurt Gov. Whitman in the general election.

On the other hand, if Murray is the GOP candidate, our prospects for picking up this seat are good. As indicated by the votes cast in the most recent statewide election, the potential Republican vote is 54 percent of the vote. Murray would receive a majority of the votes cast, especially if next year turns out to be -- what the polls today indicate -- a good year for the Republicans nationwide.



Murray Sabrin talks strategy with Alan Cousin, Mike Holmes and Charles Muth at the RLC 1998 Convention.



Gun Control is People Control

by Richard E. Sincere, Jr.

The earliest American gun control laws were passed in the Southern states that later became the Confederacy. These laws explicitly denied the right to keep and bear arms to free blacks as well as slaves.

According to legal scholar Clayton E. Cramer, this was due to "the desire to keep blacks controlled." Later, these laws were expanded and refined.

Cramer explains in his 1994 book, *For the Defense of Themselves and the State*:

"At the end of the Civil War, the newly restored Southern legislatures adopted a series of laws known as the Black Codes; the purpose of these laws was to create restrictions on free blacks that would maintain the dominant position of Southern whites. Many of these restrictions were aimed at reducing the freedmen to a position of economic dependence; others seem designed to make them unable to defend themselves. (A case can be made that the two situations were connected.)"

These laws even went so far, in some cases, to deny the right of blacks to own dogs, for fear that the dogs might defend their owners against attack. Such laws were passed to make ex-slaves and their families easy targets for lynch mobs and disreputable government officials.

In the aftermath of the brutal killings at Columbine High School in Colorado, we should ponder this history. President Clinton has proposed an expansion of federal gun control laws, and state legislatures will also consider changes in the weeks and months to come. Yet we must beware of hastening to "do something" in reaction to this tragedy. As Shakespeare said in *Romeo and Juliet*, "Wisely and slow: they stumble that run fast."

The anti-black gun laws of the Old South are not the only examples of racist use of state control to prevent disliked minorities from protecting themselves. Syndicated columnist Stephen H. Miller, writing shortly before the Littleton massacre, reminded his readers that "it's worth noting that one of Hitler's first actions was to forbid Jews from owning guns, thus ensuring that no effective defense could be waged against his genocide."

In presenting his suggested changes to federal gun laws, President Clinton tried to assuage the fears of hunters and target shooters that their hobbies are not at risk by these proposals. The president missed the point completely. The constitutional guaran-

tee of the right to keep and bear arms is not about sports. Its intention is to allow individuals the right to defend themselves against bandits and tyrannical government.

We cannot always rely on the police to protect us. Vin Suprynowicz, an editorial writer for the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, pointed out a few days after the Columbine shootings that "average waiting time in Los Angeles today after dialing 911 is 20 minutes."

Sometimes the police are the perpetrators of the crime itself. Just ask the families of Abner Louima or Amadou Diallo in New York City. Ask the survivors of the MOVE fire-bombing in Philadelphia.

Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, UCLA law professor Eugene Volokh notes that "it's tempting to treat the right to possess guns as a nuisance. But we don't as easily see the hundreds of thousands of people who use guns each year in self-defense," including abused spouses and stalking victims. Or, one might add, shopkeepers in "bad" neighborhoods who have to deal with robbers, thugs, and drug dealers each day.

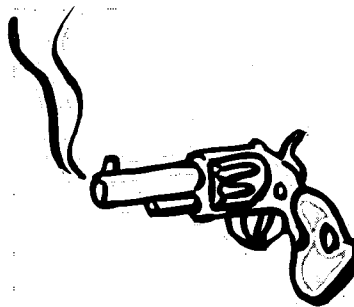
Volokh goes on to argue that "modern innovations that restrict traditional liberties are often oversold. Realistically, people willing to violate laws against violent crime will rarely be deterred by laws against gun possession." The changes President Clinton suggests are perfect examples of this ineffectiveness. One would raise the age at which individuals could possess guns from 18 to 21. Yet of all the school shootings over the past few years, only one killer -- Eric Harris in Littleton -- had reached age 18. All of them possessed their weapons illegally. The boys in Jonesboro, Arkansas, stole the weapons from a locked cabinet in a grandparent's house.

Laws now under consideration will have slight effects on the types of crimes that disturb us today. The attack in Littleton makes us grieve and cries out for action. Still, we must be deliberate, not rash, as we debate laws that will circumscribe the constitutional rights of all of us, not just of evil individuals who commit heinous acts.

We will do well to keep in mind the history of gun control laws: From the beginning, they have been designed to hurt and render defenseless minority groups who the majority despises. Even without the racist rhetoric of the past, we should think about the "disparate impact" of such laws on those of us who are still, one way or another, "outside the system."

Let's not hasten to change our gun laws. Columbine's victims deserve better.

Richard Sincere is the author of The Politics of Sentiment and other books and is chairman of the Virginia chapter of the RLC. This article appeared in The Metro Herald (Alexandria, Va.) and in the Sunday Post-Journal (Jamestown, NY) as well as other papers.



RLC Notes

RLC Liberty Index Added to Congressional Rating System

The RLC's annual Liberty Index, compiled by RLC National Chair Clifford Thies, has influence far beyond the pages of *Republican Liberty*.

Voter Information Services, Inc. (VIS) has just released a major update to its VIS Ratings which uses the Liberty Index as a key resource. VIS Ratings is an easy- to-use tool that provides citizens with a convenient way of learning about the legislation considered by the U.S. Congress and about each Congress member's position on this legislation. It also tracks each Congress member's rating from numerous advocacy groups.

Available at no charge from VIS Web site at www.vis.org, the VIS Ratings released in February are based on position on legislation of twenty advocacy groups including the American Civil Liberties Union (1997-98), American Conservative Union (1998), Americans for Democratic Action (1998), AFL-CIO (1996-97), Christian Coalition (1997-98), League of Conservation Voters (1998), National Education Association (1997-98), Public Citizen (1998), Republican Liberty Caucus (1998), the Taxpayers for Common Sense Action (1997-98), and the U.S. Public Research Interest Group (1996-98).

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From Nevada RLC Chair Chuck Muth recently: "I spent the weekend driving around the state doing Lincoln Day dinners with Gov. [Kenny] Guinn and his wife, Dema. The governor told me he had received a number of notes from RLC members thanking him for speaking at our convention. He was duly impressed with our members' courtesy and thoughtfulness. We left a very good first impression."

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Mike Holmes delivered an address to the Greater Houston Pachyderm Club (the largest in Harris City) in February on "Libertarianism: the future of the GOP."

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The Ohio Republican Liberty Caucus now has a web site: <http://community.cleveland.com/cc/ohiorlc>

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The Massachusetts chapter of the Republican Liberty Caucus held its second annual meeting in Cambridge today at the home of chapter member Peter Sheinfeld. The guest speaker was David Trumbull, chairman of the Cambridge RCC, who gave an informative and inspiring talk on candidate recruitment.

After David's speech, the members reelected Alan Cousin, chairman; Reid Morrison of Boston, vice chairman; and Brian Seaworth of Cambridge treasurer; and elected David Trumbull secretary and John Goggin parliamentarian.

The members adopted Ian Bayne's plan to begin a community-access cable program, and appointed a committee to coordinate implementation. Chapter members adopted a plan to appoint re-

gional coordinators to expand recruitment and form subchapters, and John MacMillan was named the first regional coordinator.

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Ron Gunzburger of *Politics1* turned its spotlight in February on Murray Sabrin and the RLC: "Professor Murray Sabrin, a former Republican who was the 1997 Libertarian nominee for New Jersey Governor, has switched back to the GOP again. Sabrin gave the national LP one of their strongest showings in any statewide race to date as the gubernatorial nominee, raising an adequate amount of money and participating in the televised debates. Although he finished in third place with approximately 5 percent of the vote, the antitax and pro-life Sabrin drained conservative votes away from pro-choice incumbent Governor Christie Whitman (R) ... As a born-again Republican, Sabrin is back on the campaign trail as a dark horse GOP candidate for U.S. Senator against liberal incumbent Frank Lautenberg (D). Sabrin is already touting an early endorsement from the Republican Liberty Caucus -- a national group of GOP libertarians."

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An article by RLC National Chairman Clifford Thies' concerning medical marijuana appeared in the *Manchester (N.H.) Union Leader* on March 23. This is something of a coup, as the *Union Leader* seldom accepts commentary articles from outside its stable of regular writers.

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RLC Executive Director Tom Walls will represent the RLC at the World Libertarian conference in Costa Rica in August, sponsored by the International Society for Individual Liberty. For more information, see <http://www.liberty-cr1999.org>.

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Pundit John Ralston in his April 1 e-briefing noted that the RLC's Chuck Muth "won't go quietly into the night": "GOP

www.Antiwar.com

Your best source for antiwar news, viewpoints, and activities
Committee Against U.S. Intervention

Reagan's Libertarian Legacy

"One positive legacy of the Reagan administration is that, even these days, Americans no longer have blind faith that government will do right by them ... There are many reasons why libertarian, or limited, government is better government, but one of these is that it's less corruptible. A government that can give people anything they want is a fat, juicy target for lobbyists, millionaires and ambitious bureaucrats alike."

- James Gillen, *CityLife*, Jan. 28

RLC Notes

spinmeister Chuck Muth may have been caught in the recent purge of the state Republican Party, but he will not go gently. Ever.

"Muth recently announced he will open a campaign training school in Las Vegas, and in his capacity as chairman of the Nevada Republican Liberty Caucus recently sent out a letter to potential donors for the project.

"He has lost none of his smashmouth style: 'U.S.A., 1968. Hippies and yippies. Burning bras. Burning draft cards. Sit-ins, teach-ins, love-ins and Laugh-in. Tune in, drop out. Pot heads and Dead-Heads. College unrest. Race riots. Vietnam. Tet. Napalm. Sex, drugs, rock 'n roll. Oh yeah, and Harry Reid got elected to the Nevada State Assembly.

"What a crazy, mixed-up year that was.

"Now, over 30 years later, a colossal screw-up like Bill Clinton is defiling the presidency and the White House, and Harry Reid is the #2 Democrat in the United States Senate. Some progress.'

"Frustrated with the GOP's mushiness and poor candidate recruitment, Muth makes the case in the letter for his campaign school, and asks for contributions to help fund the effort."

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Bill Eggers, after his unsuccessful run for the California Assembly, has resurfaced in Austin, Texas, working for the State Comptroller's office (run by RLC-endorsed Carol Keeton Rylander, who was elected last fall) on both the Texas Performance Review project and will soon be working on the Citizen's Waste Commission.

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Facing heated protests from more than a quarter-million Americans, federal regulators today announced they are withdrawing the proposed "Know Your Customer" regulations that would have forced banks to spy on American citizens. The agencies proposing the regulations were the Federal Reserve, the FDIC, the Office of Comptroller of the Currency, and the Office of Thrift Supervision.

Leading the charge against "Know Your Customer" has been

Forbes Calls for Social Security Privatization

Publisher Steve Forbes, who has advocated Social Security privatization for years in his magazine, has decided to make this traditional libertarian plank a centerpiece of his campaign for president.

Forbes said the transition to a mostly private system could be made within seven years.

"The way you make it feasible is you make it clear you're not going to tamper with the system for those who are on it or about to go on it," Forbes told the Associated Press.

"We have to rapidly phase in for younger people a new system where eventually the bulk of their Social Security tax goes to their own individual retirement accounts."

He also urged ending a "penalty" for those who continue working between the ages of 65 and 69.

U.S. Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX), the only member of the House's Committee on Banking and Financial Services to oppose a blueprint of the plan the rest of the committee endorsed in 1998.

"This has been a minor skirmish in the battle over privacy rights and the protection of civil liberties, but it is a victory for which many people have worked very hard," said Rep. Paul, who early this year introduced H.R. 516, to overturn the regulations if implemented.

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Fresh from his success leading the fight against the FDIC's proposed "Know Your Customer" regulations, Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) is now working to ensure federal agencies will not be able to assemble biometric profiles of Americans.

The Texas Republican wants to prohibit massive government databases of DNA samples, photographs, and retinal scans.

"It seems like everywhere you turn there's another government attempt to accumulate more information about us. This bill will be designed to stop those moves that use government money to set up data banks with DNA and other identifiers, such as pictures of the retina," Paul said.

The federal government, including the FBI and the INS, has recently begun to record more biometric information about Americans.

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First the stamp, now this. Ayn Rand's influence is more pervasive than we might have thought, as indicated by this article from the front page of the May 11 *Washington Times*. It notes that a new "nondenominational Christian" college designed specifically to meet the needs of home-schooled students is about to break ground in Purcellville, Virginia. The name of the new institution? Patrick Henry College. (It only offers one major, so far, which would seem to suggest that the designation "Patrick Henry University" -- where the heroes of the novel *Atlas Shrugged* were educated -- is still some years away.)

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According to Richard Morin and Claudia Deane in the April 27 *Washington Post*, Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura assailed Libertarian Party activists who were allegedly heckling him: "You're a Libertarian, aren't you? You're the guys with the candidates who get about 1,800 votes. You don't really want to win, do you?" The governor, considered to be a libertarian himself, was speaking at a luncheon of the libertarian Cato Institute.

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This year's efforts to train Republican candidates will be most aggressive in history, said Charles Muth, chairman of the Nevada Republican Liberty Caucus. And his campaign training seminars for the Western States Campaign Training Center (WSCTC) is a big part of the effort.

The first was held in Elko, Nevada, on April 24. This and other WSCTC seminars will focus on the basics of grassroots organization and fund-raising. The rest of the schedule includes the following seminars:

*May 21 - Las Vegas, NV
May 22 - Palm Springs, CA
July 15 - Baltimore, MD
August 14 - Austin, TX
August 28 - New York, NY*

RLC Notes

Voucher Victory! Libertarian Ideas Come of Age in Florida

Libertarians cheered Gov. Jeb Bush and the Republican-dominated legislature in April for passing one of the premiere libertarian policy innovations of the last generation: school vouchers.

"Gov. Jeb Bush is making a national name for himself by championing the cause of genuine educational reform," said Tom Walls, the executive director of the RLC and a Gainesville, Fla., resident. "Government schools have failed Florida's children -- parents know it and kids know it. This historic measure helps loosen the government monopoly on education and gives parents and students a choice."

The Florida Senate passed the bill 25-15 on April 30. The House passed it 70-48 two days earlier. Under the plan, schools will be graded A, B, C, D or F, based on student performance on standardized tests. Then the state will provide scholarships to students at Florida's worst government schools regardless of the student's grades or income. If the government has failed in its charge to provide a decent education, parents will be allowed to spend their tax money elsewhere -- including private schools.

"When Nobel prize winner Milton Friedman popularized the voucher idea in the 1960s it seemed radical to many," Walls said. "But through the hard work of parents and education activists, times have changed. And Florida's children are the number one beneficiaries of this philosophical shift."

Today, only four of Florida's 3,000 public schools would qualify as "failures." But tougher standards were approved late last year and the number of failing government schools could climb to 170.

Walls said the program should be extended to all students as soon as possible. Many RLCers advocate the complete separation of school and state and sees vouchers as the logical first step toward achieving that goal.

The Washington, D.C.-based Institute for Justice, an explicitly libertarian version of the ACLU, has promised to defend Florida's program against any legal challenges.

by Alan Turin

South Florida RLCers formed a regional chapter. At the December 1998 RLC national convention, Florida Chair Jeff Palmer and RLC Editor Philip Blumel planned the new effort.

They began with a shift in approach, emphasizing issues over candidate recruitment at their first meeting on May 18 at the David William Hotel in Coral Gables. The group is also planning to work within the YRs and county Republican executive committees.

A letter of support on the voucher issue was sent to Gov. Jeb Bush. In his first campaign for governor in 1994, Bush had sought the RLC endorsement and his Lt. governor nominee Tom Feeney was on the RLC Board of Advisors.

The Florida RLC is planning to attend and perhaps hold a hospitality suite in conjunction with the presidential straw poll, this year called Presidency 2000. This straw poll has become the largest GOP event in Florida.

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An interesting perspective on the philosophical shift under way in Tallahassee comes from Tom Regnier, vice chair of the Libertarian Party of Florida.

Regnier participated in a lobbying effort organized by the Florida Citizens for a Sound Economy in which activists from around the state converged on Tallahassee to promote tort reform, the governor's \$1 billion tax cut, school vouchers and a rational policy towards Everglades restoration.

"On the bus on the way back to the hotel I got into conversation with a state rep from the Tampa area," Regnier said. "It was interesting because he told me he was a libertarian before I told him I was one. 'The government should stay out of our personal lives and out of our economic lives,' he said.

"He also said there are several libertarian reps in the House, but they can't run on the Libertarian ticket because they can't win. I told him I was with the LP and said that I thought we would be becoming much more visible in the near future..."

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Amid the slightly too loud strains of zydeco music and boiled crayfish at the Palm Beach Club in west Houston, the Texas RLC met on March 27 to elect officers and conduct other business.

All of the current officers were reelected by acclamation (chair, Lonnie Brantley; vice chair, Linda Thomas; secretary, Phil Boyd-Robertson; and treasurer, Forrest Aston). RLC

members also heard a report on recent congressional actions by Rep. Ron Paul, given by Paul staffer Boyd-Robertson, who detailed Paul's privacy agenda legislation including killing the infamous "Know Your Customer" FDIC regulations.

Former State Sen. and RLC Advisory Board member Jerry Patterson, a trade association executive in Austin, outlined recent political developments in the Texas legislature, with emphasis on Second Amendment gun rights issues. The state RLC also voted to fully endorse State Rep. John Culberson in the GOP primary race for the TX 7th Congressional District seat being vacated by House Ways & Means Committee Chair Bill Archer. Culberson recently joined the RLC Advisory Board and has strong support from RLCers in his Congressional bid. The 7th CD is George Bush's old House district and is the most heavily Republican district in the nation.

RLC chair Brantley outlined progress on a project to tape a series outlining the RLC political mission and campaign issues agenda designed to help candidates sell ideas to the public.

**Republican Liberty
Federal Campaign Fund Office
10878 Westheimer, Suite 395
Houston, TX 77042
(713) 867-9060**

REPUBLICAN LIBERTY CAUCUS
<http://www.rlc.org/>
New Member Info: 1-800-752-9646

**Administrative Office
611 Pennsylvania Ave. S.E. #370
Washington DC 20003
(352) 373-1768 voice
rlc@rlc.org**

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