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for US Senate

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Cronyism

Enron was widely recognized (and praised) as a world-class player. Ken Lay wrote the playbook for others to follow.

Go to www.FEC.gov and look at the list of PAC contributions to incumbents in your state. It is not hard to understand why incumbents have an advantage over their opponents. It is equally clear why the PACs make these contributions.

Let me conclude with a pet peeve. There is no such thing as “crony capitalism.” Cronyism and capitalism are complete opposites. Capitalism, the economic/political system upon which America was built, is based on free markets; cronyism is based on buying influence to control markets. The term “cronyism capitalism” makes as much sense as “free-market communism.”

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America's biggest problem is cronyism

By Mike Beitler

Libertarian candidate for U.S. Senate

Perhaps the biggest problem in America today is cronyism. Cronyism is big business in bed with big government. Big businesses buy influence through their campaign contributions, including political action committee contributions.

Small business owners and entrepreneurs do not have the money to hire professional lobbyists or to fund a PAC. Big businesses have the money to hire professional lobbyists and to fund PACs. The professional lobbyists hired by big businesses work to pass burdensome regulations to crush smaller competitors. The big business PACs make contributions to political candidates (mostly incumbents) in exchange for favors.



Lobbying for big business has become a big business itself. One look at K Street in Washington DC will give you an indication of the extent of this form of corruption. Some of these lobbyists are the most powerful people in Washington.

It is common knowledge in politics that PACs only contribute to incumbents. Of course, an exception will be made if a well-funded opponent has the financial clout to beat the incumbent. The exception is made because the ultimate goal is not to help any particular candidate but to buy influence.

Cronyism is not new. Eisenhower warned America about a developing military-industrial complex. Daniel Guérin's 1936 book, “Fascism and Big Business” was about fascist governments and their corrupt relationships with big business.

Robert Bradley's recent book, “Capitalism at Work” (2009), contains descriptions of how powerful individuals and corporations have mastered the skills of cronyism. Ken Lay of

(Continued inside)

Abolish ABC boards, end corruption

By Brian Irving

North Carolina is among 18 states where government controls liquor sales, but it's the only state where local ABC boards are virtually independent of anyone's control.

If a private business was operated as corruptly and inefficiently as North Carolina's ABC boards, not only would heads roll, some folks would go up in jail and the businesses probably would probably go out of business.



It's no wonder the state monopoly on liquor sales is rife with corruption. The very fact that the State sells such a product is a contradiction. How is it moral or ethical for the State to sell a product that can be abused, while at the same time arresting people who abuse it?

A bartender caught selling a drink to a minor, or someone already drunk, might be fined, or even go to jail. Yet an ABC store clerk who does the same thing

probably won't even get a reprimand, let alone lose their job.

Government has no business selling liquor, or for that matter, any other product or service that can be more effectively and efficiently provided by the private sector.

The only reason for the State to maintain its liquor monopoly is to provide yet another patronage plum for political insiders and the cronies of elected officials.

The surest, most certain and simplest solution to the corruption in the state's liquor monopoly is to abolish it, a position the North Carolina Libertarian Party has advocated for years. Yet this obvious reform was not even on the table.

The ABC system is a state-monopoly that forcefully meddles in the free market, imposes the subjective values of a minority on the rest of us, needlessly limits the economic freedom of North Carolina citizens, and violates the rights of citizens to take part in the peaceful, voluntary, social and business activities of their choice.

Abolition is a simple and potentially profitable reform. It would end one type of the corruption cancer in state government by cutting out one of the diseased organs.

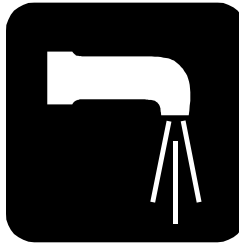
At the same time, the state would receive a windfall in revenue from the sales of its liquor stores to private

If water isn't as rare as diamonds, why does it have to be conserved?

Have you ever noticed that very rare items like gold, diamonds and dinosaur bones never produce calls for their conservation, yet items as abundant as water do?

Chris Cole, a Mecklenburg County libertarian has, and explains why in a letter-to-the-editor he wrote in response to an editorial about conserving water.

Cole said that there is no crisis, regardless of the scarcity of such items. Yet the paper insists that water, so plentiful that at times "we are worried about finding ways to eliminate the excess," must be conserved.



Why is this, Cole asks. It's because precious and scarce items are distributed by competing private companies.

"That invokes the pricing mechanism of the free market, also referred to as the law of supply and demand. As a product becomes less available (supply), the price increases, reducing demand. Not only does the rising price eliminate the need for conservation, it also redirects supply to its most important uses.

"However, water distribution in our area is frequently the responsibility of municipal monopolies. Monopolies can declare prices by fiat, without the free market price mechanism to control them. Thus there is no economic signal to customers to slow down. Rather, municipalities produce Chicken Little-style press releases ... followed by increasingly bombastic warnings and consequences.

"Yet, still no one seems to wonder why such measures are never required for far-rarer commodities.

"The answer is also the solution. Other commodities are distributed by the free market, and thus subject to supply and demand. Simply privatize water distribution, and we can have the same advantages without government bullying."

Thomas Jefferson's 10 guidelines for government

Compiled by Jonathan Derr

1. The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.
2. If we can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them, they must become happy.
3. I would rather be exposed to the inconveniences attending too much liberty than to those attending too small a degree of it.
4. The majority, oppressing an individual, is guilty of a crime, abuses its strength, and by acting on the law of the strongest breaks up the foundations of society.
5. Of liberty I would say that, in the whole plenitude of its extent, it is unobstructed action according to our will. But rightful liberty is unobstructed action according to our will within limits drawn around us by the equal rights of others. I do not add 'within the limits of the law,' because law is often but the tyrant's will, and always so when it violates the right of an individual.
6. Difference of opinion leads to enquiry, and enquiry to truth.
7. It should be remembered as an axiom of eternal truth in politics, that whatever power in any government is independent, it is absolute also; in theory only at first while the spirit of the people is up, but in practice as fast as that relaxes.
8. An honest man can feel no pleasure in the exercise of power over his fellow citizens.
9. It is error alone which needs the support of government. Truth can stand by itself.
10. What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance?

