

Silberger for Governor

Is this a joke? Has the New York Libertarian Party not already anointed William Weld? He is our only prospective candidate for Governor mentioned in the pre-convention issue of **FreeNY**, and he was covered there in as much depth as the required brevity of that publication allows.

You NYLP activists know me, Donald Silberger. But few outside of the NYLP, besides a non-celebrity's normal coterie, know me or of me. I do not seek to become a household topic or a subject of tabloid gossip.

You know also what I stand for. You know what sort of campaign I will conduct if the NYLP nominates me. You know that I will campaign my heart out, and will speak the essential truth as I have come after seventy six years to understand it. You have heard me elucidate truths which nobody with the faintest hope of electoral victory can afford to utter.

It is for the opportunity to present such truths that I once again seek your nomination — because such truths must be articulated by some candidate for office in a free and decent society. Indeed, it is the offering before the electorate of clear, unhedged, statements of such truths that constitutes the only real justification for the Libertarian Party's existence.

The majority now seem to believe that it is in order to elect libertarians to public office that the Libertarian Party exists, and that the Libertarian Party's perennial failure to accomplish that goal signifies the emptiness of our party's promise. I emphatically disagree with that viewpoint towards our purpose and our *raison d'être*, and I have begged the organizers of this convention for an opportunity to present in full my alternative vision.

You know I can argue with restraint and proficiency — but that I am inclined to restrict myself to the few issues about which I am especially passionate, seeking to inspire the small audience that shares those passions, and who are disenfranchised in a country where no campaign honors them.

I believe it foolish for a non-celebrity candidate with sparse finances, whose audience is small and whose media coverage is predictably meager, to announce all that he might accomplish as Governor. I will not abase myself, nor you, my compatriots, with any such mockery.

It is dishonest to parade before the public as if I believed I might be elected Governor. I understand that this posturing is expected of a Candidate, just

a certain sort of apparel is expected. It silly to pretend that New Yorkers will be interested in how a Donald Silberger plans to serve them as Governor.

You know also that I consider it unlikely that I can attract more than a ten or twenty thousand votes at the most, and that a fatal lightning bolt is more likely for me than my winning our party the 50,000 votes which NYState requires of an organization seeking to to be deemed an official political party.

Some of you may know also that I consider our unrestrained quest for official legal status as a political party to be deeply misguided. Indeed, that is mainly what I want to discuss with you at this convention, whether you plan to vote for me or not – and I am undeceived as well about my prospects for your nomination.

The majority are here to see and to listen to William Weld. So I will discuss William Weld's prospective candidacy for Governor under our banner.

Of course, the NYLP's choice of its candidate for Governor has not yet been formalized. The annointee has not yet been nominated. Our delegates have not yet submitted their ballots. The choice is not yet official. Indeed, although Mr. Weld has elevated us by his public expression of interest in our nomination, he has not yet actually accepted it.

But those are mere formalities. Everyone is sure of the outcome: William Weld's gubernatorial candidacy under our banner is a *fait accompli*. It was decided by a group of three of our wisest people, who met in person with this prominent man. They were impressed with him. Their recommendations have been taken into the hearts of the majority in our State Committee. William Weld has been acclaimed by its Goal 50K subcommittee.

And why not!

This man has already been a Governor. He has a significant probability of being elected Governor of New York – a probability which nobody sane would have attributed to any LP candidate for Governor anywhere in the United States since our Party's inception thirty five years ago. He is a polished, attractive, politically skilled and connected individual, an excellent speaker.

Mr. Weld has expressed some libertarian views. But, he is a serious professional, a statesman who hopes his vacation from elected office will be brief. Such people are pragmatists. They hew to the politically feasible.

We are eager to hear from Mr. Weld. His presence among us today boosts our convention. However, before our delegates cast their votes, they need to hear him state his intentions and goals.

What issues will his campaign emphasize? How much will he help us to ease our nominating petition woes? Will he continue to mention our tiny Libertarian Party with the kindness and frequency of recent weeks?

When someone of Weld's stature speaks for our tiny party, he invites us into the spotlight. How long in obscurity have we hungered for that!

This prominent man has already announced his wish to run on our Libertarian ticket. Or does his interest lie in our endorsement? The difference between nomination and endorsement now seems murky.

I believe our party has never before endorsed a head of ticket.

Weld's only request of us thus far is to leave open the question of his running mate. After all, Weld's main vote will come from the place he seeks on the Republican ticket; his choice of LtGov may be mandated by his GOP candidacy. His presence on our line, characteristically near the bottom of the ballot, will net him a few tens of thousands of votes at most. Mr. Weld hopes to win the Governorship. That requires millions of votes. Realistic ambition militates against his alienating a far vaster constituency than ours.

Our party will not abandon its honorable tradition of nominating None Of The Above for Governor. But a human face also is fitting as opposition to the inauguration that is apparently imminent.

I, Donald Silberger, your 1998 candidate for Lieutenant Governor and again your 2004 candidate for the USSenate, offer to this purpose my own face and my ideals and dedication, all of which are known to you.

Our party is at a crossroads in this present convention. And, therefore, most of all on this occasion I respectfully raise a few questions which I believe William Weld should answer in our presence, and in the presence of the media which his fame has drawn into our midst.

Mr. Weld has said that he wishes to keep the government out of our pocketbooks and out of our bedrooms. That statement is a noble one, considering the increased intrusiveness of government in our lives. It is a statement that fits well with our party's ideals.

But we have read rumors of other statements, of a less libertarian character, that have been made by or attributed to Mr. Weld.

He stated that he favors "medical marijuana", whatever that commodity may be, but that he opposes decriminalizing the illegal drugs. Why, as head of the Libertarian ticket in a state oppressed by draconian Rockefeller laws, would he not wish government out of all that constitutes our private lives?

Even legislators who voted in the Rockefeller laws now repudiate them. But the laws seem eternal. They incarcerate thousands of harmless citizens, and destroy their lives and their families.

How can a Libertarian candidate support any such laws?

Do we not own ourselves? Or are chattel of the state, which dictates what substances we shall be permitted to take into our own bodies?

It is not only human sexuality that has been repressed in our society, and against whose repression a libertarian must fight. Self-medication too is a human right. Do not one's choices of amusement and enlightenment — indeed, of any activity that does not interfere with the rights of another individual, fall within the requisite scope of a *bona fide* Libertarian candidacy?

Do we not have a legitimate basic right to buy and sell to each other freely, without deception and coercion, whatever services and commodities both sellers and purchasers agree to exchange? Again the proviso of course is that the rights of those not party to the transactions are not compromised by them. But is not governmental intrusion on such matters also to be opposed openly and plainly by a legitimate Libertarian candidate?

Then there is “Gun Control”, which is code for People Control. With government's augmenting intrusiveness, violence, and thievery, officialdom has good reason to fear and distrust the very citizens whose servants they claim to be. “Gun control” means the disarmament of the free citizenry of our republic, transforming them into dependent cowering victims of whatever predatory forces may assault them in the streets, invade their homes, rob them, terrify them, rape them, menace their children, or murder them.

No “gun control” measures can deprive violent predators of the tools of their trade. Only the law-abiding are disarmed by such laws, and thus put to disadvantage at the hands of thugs both in and out of uniform.

Does not our right to Life imply our right to the tools to defend our lives? Where will Libertarian candidate Weld stand on “Gun Control”?

The main advantage of a high-profile candidate for our party lies in the media's proclivity to report the words of such a person. The ideas expressed can therefore reach the attentions of a larger audience than is usual for us. Thus, our libertarian message, our ideas and ideals, may get considered by multitudes who generally ignore minor party candidates.

Our name too can thus be amplified in the public consciousness.

But our name will be amplified only if it is frequently mentioned by our high-profile candidate. And, more important, our political views will be carried to that larger audience only if our high-profile candidate consistently expresses and explains truly libertarian ideas.

Will candidate Weld make regular allusion to his Libertarian candidacy? And, what libertarian message will people learn from William Weld, as he represents the New York Libertarian Party at the head of our ticket in 2006?

Will people be drawn to libertarianism by William Weld? Or, will his introduction to his public of libertarianism be transmogrified by what he says into a long-term camouflage that conceals or blurs our concept?

These questions are vital, because any high profile associated with our name creates a long-term public definition for us. I cite the high-profile names of Lyndon LaRouche and of Howard Stern to exemplify what I fear.

If Weld's libertarian message is clear, consistent, and integrated, then his candidacy can be a triumph for us — of far greater importance ultimately than any vote total on our line which he may draw to us. Short of gaining us a libertarian in public office, such a vote total serves only as a measure of the degree to which the public has been reached by, and pleased by, our candidate who acts in our name.

If Weld's message is garbled, sound bitten, platitudinous, and composed of slogans, and if his honest disagreements with us are left unproclaimed as such, then our party may lose the only positive quality it possesses. If Mr. Weld puts out an anti-libertarian message under our Libertarian banner then we ourselves may forget what it was that drew us to this party.

Where we have thus far lacked (and may continue to lack) power and what usually passes for "success", we have for most of three decades maintained our integrity, and have given definition to our special view of decent society. Losing that, we will have lost all that distinguishes our party from the disingenuousness and machinations of the standard two electoral employment agencies, our opposition to which has engendered the Libertarian Party in the first place. We will have lost our reason to exist; our *de facto* non-existence cannot lag far behind that loss.

Finally, some urgent, immediate, and practical questions:

William Weld, sir: As our candidate, will you do what is necessary to get yourself and our Libertarian slate on the NYState ballot in 2006?

Will you continue as our Libertarian candidate through Election Day, and represent us vocally as such up through the end of your campaign?

And will you remind voters that a vote for you at the normally unseen Libertarian line, characteristically at or near the bottom of the New York State ballot, will be as useful to elect you Governor, and far more useful in the service of true democracy in our state, than a vote for you in the standard employment-agency Republican line at the top of the ballot?

I ask you this, sir, because you expect to be the Republican candidate as well as ours. The New York Republican Party has not played nice with our tiny and impecunious New York Libertarian Party in the recent past.