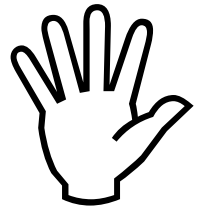




The Invisible Hand

Newsletter of the Campus Libertarian Movement



End the War on Drugs

By Cameron Gower

Over the past few months I have discussed the topic of drug legalization with a number of people. It is a striking position to most, for one to argue for an end to drug prohibition. I am tired of the common misconceptions concerning the drug legalization movement. Some seem to think if one supports legalization, they condone drug use. On the contrary, as a supporter of legalization, I fully understand that drugs are addicting and can be detrimental to one's health. Yet what I have come to realize is that the government's War on Drugs is actually worse than the drugs themselves.

Social engineers act as if they have divine power which leads to hopeless dreams of drugs being legislated out of existence. If making heroin illegal were equivalent to annihilating its existence then I wouldn't have much to complain about. However, the truth is that the legal status of a drug in present-day America doesn't change its availability – only the means transaction. Legendary Chicago gangster Al Capone received his funding for organized crime in the 1920s by selling alcohol during Prohibition. What was true then is true now. Street gangs across this country – from the Bloods and Crips to the Latin Kings – fund their violent activities by selling illegal drugs in what some estimate as a \$400 billion market. As long as the desire for drugs exists, producers will try to meet the needs of consumers. Drug prohibition does nothing other than pass the torch and the profits from law abiding entrepreneurs to violent criminals.

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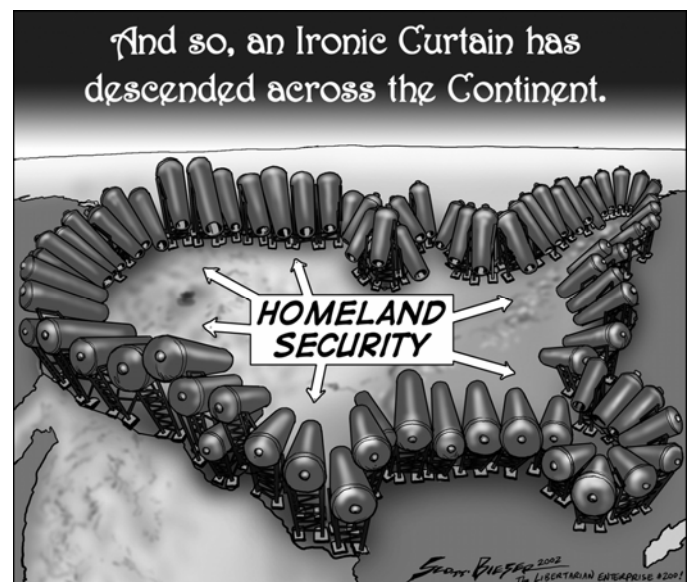
Banning People

By Darian Worden

H.L. Mencken once said that “The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed - and hence clamorous to be led to safety - by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.” One of the latest hobgoblins is the “illegal immigrant.” What is an illegal immigrant? A person who has crossed a border without filling out the proper paperwork.

The important question to ask is “who has the right to determine who may or may not enter a country?” The only true answer is the person who wishes to emigrate, and anyone who owns property involved in the move (generally land and sometimes a vehicle). The concept of trespass only works with private property. A person has the right to decide who may cross the land that he or she owns. Nobody has the right to interfere with an individual's use of his property when the use does not initiate force on another individual.

Continued on page 6



See more of Scott Bieser's art at www.scottbieser.com

On Hurricanes—Is Government the Eye of the Storm or the Destructive Wind?

By Brian R. Dawley

After Hurricane Katrina struck land, it became apparent that the government wasn't prepared to handle the situation. Although the government made many mistakes in handling Hurricane Katrina, the real problem started long before it ever showed up on the meteorologists' radars. Hurricane Katrina merely brought these problems with the government's approach to dealing with hurricanes to light.

Coastal property has always been desirable for many reasons: the scenic ocean view, close access to the beach, and the weather tends to be much better than average. However, obtaining property on the coast was once much more difficult than it is today. Government at all levels has subsidized people's choice to live on the coast, which creates unbalanced incentives for property buyers. Congress passed the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in the 1950's which paved the way for these subsidies.

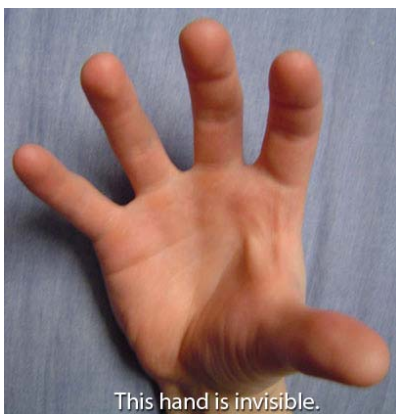
One important aspect of the NFIP is that, if states decide to participate, the NFIP provides Treasury-backed flood insurance for residents in flood zones. Prior to the NFIP, flood insurance was largely unavailable for a number of reasons, such as almost guaranteed losses to insurers as disasters are almost certain and, when they occur, they are catastrophic. This provided a proper incentive for potential residents—the private market didn't

provide flood insurance because the market wasn't willing to pay the enormous premiums which would have accompanied the insurance. Congress stepped in to provide an "essential" service to the people, offering flood insurance through the NFIP at far below actuarially-sound rates. The NFIP allows Congress to dip into the Treasury if a storm causes losses beyond what the premiums for flood insurance takes in. In other words, taxpayers who aren't interested in taking the risk of living on the coast are paying for others who are.

Flood insurance isn't the end of the story, though. The federal government also provides hurricane-mitigating structures and services. For instance, after Hurricane Katrina, the media was full of stories about the levees which were breached. The levees serve as an excellent example of the problem with these mitigating techniques—they tend to fail when they are needed most. This is another incentive to relocate to the coast, yet it is also another problem with the government's approach. Thinking that they will be safe upon arrival, new residents relocate to the coast only to be horribly surprised when the safety structures they trusted their lives to fail. Furthermore, when the structures fail, the government is quick to arrive with more false promises by rebuilding them, making them supposedly stronger.

The solution to this problem is unfortunately not as easy as merely ending flood insurance and mitigating techniques immediately.

Continued on page 7



The views, opinions and representations expressed in *The Invisible Hand* are solely those of the authors and do not represent the views, opinions or representations of any university, school, or organization.

"Every individual necessarily labors to render the annual revenue of society as great as he can. He generally neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it. He intends only his own gain, and he is, in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was not part of his intention."

Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations

End the War on Drugs

(continued from page 1)

These illegitimate producers do not care about the safety of their drugs and are subject to no sanitation checks. This leads to, just as it has in the past, deaths from poorly manufactured and labeled street drugs. These problems would not exist if drugs were produced in a legal environment. In a drug legal society, reputable companies would produce drugs of known potency and compete through price and sanitation instead of gang warfare.

Drugs aren't cheap, but most consumers will stop at nothing to satisfy their addiction. This leads to a rise in violent crime as addicts resort to theft in the criminal underworld. These desperate acts aren't necessarily a byproduct of drug use – they come as a direct consequence of the failed War on Drugs. If drugs were legal and sold in a competitive, open market, most addicts would not be forced into theft to pay for what they will not stop consuming anyway.

The US government plays a zero-sum game of Whack-A-Drug-Dealer by spending \$30 billion a year on a losing battle. It is important to realize that there is a strong correlation between the amount of money spent on the War on Drugs and the incentive to get into the illegal drug business. Every time a local drug dealer is busted the cost of drugs rise. This creates an irresistible incentive for newcomers to join the industry. A never ending supply of willing dealers ensures that every penny we spend fighting drugs is a wasted one. Through this regressive cycle we squander not only billions of dollars but also around 50% of our police resources along with the space, time, and money spent on housing nearly 400,000 prisoners of prohibition.

Announcement:

March 17

MARCH

ON THE

PENTAGON

To demand U.S. Out of Iraq

MarchOnPentagon.org

If we focused our police resources on fighting violent crimes instead of drugs, we would double, without increasing taxes, our fight on true criminals. This alone is an attractive outcome of ending the War on Drugs, however the case for legalization becomes even stronger when one considers the criminal justice system. The sluggish court process, parole, and prison overcrowding are a product of the 25% of all prisoners who are incarcerated for drug-related, victimless crimes. These people clog our legal system while leaving truly dangerous criminals on the street.

It is time for this country to return to the principles of the Declaration of Independence. One man's rights extend to where another's begin. The government must end its attempts to protect us from ourselves. This restoration of liberty would save lives that would otherwise be lost to desperate thieves, unsanitary drugs, and gang warfare while saving police resources to fight true criminals who ought to face swift justice.

Cameron Gower is a Freshman of Nuclear Engineering and President of College Libertarians at North Carolina State University



The Insidious Logic of Transfat

By John Thomas

I have mixed feelings about healthy foods. On the one hand, I like to be careless about what I eat, I like my food casual and worrying about what's in it tends to deflate that casualness. On the other hand, I do want to lose some pounds. But if there's one thing that Libertarianism holds dear it's that personal preferences should not dictate government policies. Thus I try to distance my analysis of health issues from my personal feelings on healthy foods; I know it's impossible to do so completely, but it is certainly valuable to try. Thus I will try to keep my preference from transfat heavy foods from my opinions on government policy towards transfat, although in this case the two tend to coincide. The government really has no business dealing with transfat. Yes, it is bad for you, but people should be able to make their own lifestyle choices. I understand that most of those wanting to ban transfats act out of concern for their fellow human beings, and I appreciate that, but concern is not justification for forcing people to eat how you want them to. While I can understand the arguments of those arguing against transfat, one argument in particular I find incredibly frightening. That argument is that because the government pays some health care costs like emergency hospitalization and since transfat causes obesity which increases health care costs, government therefore has the right to ban transfat because of how much the medical care costs. This argument has also been used to attack smoking. I am frightened by it because it opens the door to a monstrous trend of limiting what people eat, what people do and possibly even what people think all because of the many fields that government has involved itself in. To say that if the government helps people out in a certain aspect of their life justifies the government controlling that aspect of life is an invitation for unlimited government control, and I find that truly terrifying.

Let us start out with the original argument, that since the government pays for certain health care costs, the government is justified in controlling activities like eating transfat. I do believe that transfat increases obesity somewhat and there is definitely a correlation between eating transfat and being unhealthy. Yet looking at that correlation

alone would exaggerate the effects of transfats. Remember always that correlation is not causation. While transfat does have an effect, the greater reason for the correlation is that people who eat lots of transfat tend not to care about what they eat in general and this causes them to become obese. If then the government really wants to control health care costs it will have to go far beyond banning transfats. One of the biggest causes of obesity is red meat; the government would have to ban that or at least give it an extra tax. Candy also causes obesity, as does ultra-refined, empty of nutrient grains like cookies, so these too would need taxes or bans. To really cut down on obesity the government would have to invade every aspect of people's diets. I'd like to point out that this is fundamentally different from say making sure food manufactures do not put poisons in our food, in that case there is a deception on the part of the food manufactures, here there is no deception, any person who wants to face the truth will know most of the foods that are bad for them, and with a little research they will know all of them, anyone who wants to control their diet will need will power but they would be capable of eating well. That is not the issue, the issue is those that eat badly cost the health care system money, even if they eat badly knowing fully well what the food does to them, and thus the government is justified in controlling their diets and their free choice in food. To say this opens the door to hundreds of taxes and bans, and to carry this logic further can lead to even more control of people's life styles.

If the government is justified in controlling what people eat because of health care costs, why not other activities. After all, eating is something essential, while many other enjoyable behaviors which tax the health care system are not. Bungee jumping is dangerous and those injuries cost money, extreme sports can also cost money, and so they can be banned. Unhealthy food is usually justified by people because it gives enjoyment, so if it can be banned it makes sense that so can other enjoyable activities. Certain cars are less safe than others, so they can be banned. Conveniences like drive-throughs cause less walking and therefore worsen obesity and so they can be banned. Throughout our lives we make choices between the safer or healthier course and the more enjoyable or convenient course, and to say that because of the

costs to the health care system the government can force us to choose the healthier course would mean that the our lives would be removed from our control. Often we are defined by the choices we make, often those same choices between safer or more enjoyable, if we choose to engage in dangerous sports we can make ourselves the daredevil guy, if we choose to eat tasty but unhealthy food we can make ourselves food connoisseurs. Yet if we let the government make those choices for us then the government will define our lives. In fact, if they are justified in forcing us to choose the safer path in what we do, simply because it costs them, then they can stretch that justification to what we think.

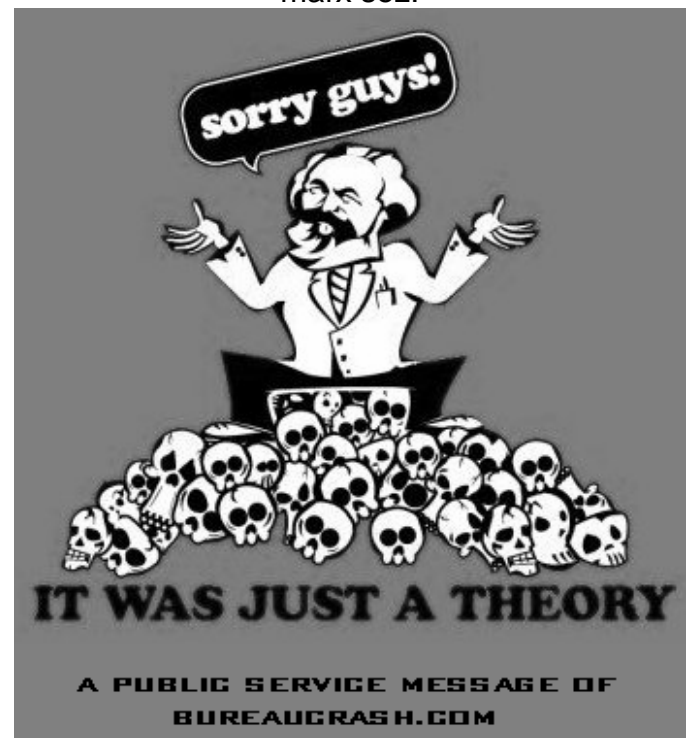
If anything that costs the government money can be controlled, then our thoughts are not safe as well. Many have argued that certain video games cause violence, and violence costs money, so they can be banned. In fact, certain books might cause people to be more aggressive and violent so the government can control books. Ideas can be violent, many variants of Communism contain calls to violence, so they can be banned, and so can perhaps certain variants of Christianity. Some would argue Islam should be banned because they associate it with violence, and it doesn't matter that that idea is ridiculous, if we argue that the government can ban things because it costs them money, well, keeping order costs them money, and if a majority of people then feel Islam is too violent, then they can pass laws against it because the floodgate was opened by this logic. So much of the thought-life of the nation can be construed as violent by different groups, and if those groups hold the majority, and if the government can ban anything which costs it money by threatening violence, then the thought-life of the nation will come to a standstill. In fact, the ideas themselves do not need to be violent, ideas that promote theft cost the government money because the government needs to investigate such thefts, ideas that prompt civil disobedience cost money because the government needs to deal with such civil disobedience, even ideas that upset people can cost the government money, because those people might become violent and that would need a costly response. To say that the government can legislate in any area that would cost it money is to say that the government can legislate anywhere in our lives,

our thoughts, and our souls. To say this is to discard the very idea of freedom.

If the government can ban things that might cost it money, suddenly everything is open to a ban. We are the sum of the choices we make, what we choose to eat, what we choose to do, what we choose to think; if the government can dictate those choices it can control us. It doesn't matter if the government is right or wrong (although we should remember that even if the government is right at this moment, it might be wrong later), what matters is to give control up control of our lives would be to discard our fundamental humanity. We are humans because we think up our choices, we are human because we make mistakes, we are human because we have a soul that is free to choose right or wrong. If we discard our choices we reduce ourselves to animals, and no amount of money is worth that. Yes the government pays an extra price for our freedom, and yes that price is passed on to the general public through taxes, but there is no price tag on freedom, to make one is a crime against our very souls.

John Thomas is a Junior at Rutgers College and an Editor of The Invisible Hand, check out his website and blog at <http://www.myspace.com/therandshow>.

marx sez:



Banning People

(continued from page 1)

As for government property, since governments are funded almost exclusively through stealing they have virtually no legitimately acquired property. Until a more voluntary and accountable system of transportation funding is put in place, government roads must be open for all as they are property held in commons.

It is aggression – the initiation of force, a violation of individual rights – when governments set lines across the earth and say that a person may not cross them. Individual rights have nothing to do with where you are born – they are possessed by virtue of being human. The Bill of Rights is in agreement with this. It does not list things that certain people can do. Instead it lists certain things that the US Government must never do. The word “citizen” is not found in the document.

It is irrelevant to a person’s rights whether they contribute positively to any economy or not, but in the interest of proving that doing the right thing is beneficial to everyone except the state, I will mention a few ways in which immigration improves the economy. When immigrants are paid low wages for jobs, the money saved on labor means more to spend on other things (including the creation of jobs for natives). Not only do immigrants produce much of value, they are also consumers. They buy things in America like everyone else. Immigrants also generally pay more to the government than they receive in services, and when they don’t, the welfare state is the only loser, not productive Americans. For more economic facts about immigration, see the excellent International Society for Individual Liberty pamphlet at <http://isil.org/resources/lit/immigration-english.html>.

Many would say that those who oppose immigration are simply racists. Racism is often a factor, sometimes openly and sometimes not. However, I am making an educated guess that racism is not the primary motivation of most people in the Fortress USA crowd, but rather the state-encouraged pathology of considering anything not under control of government to be dangerous. The thought of thousands of people moving around the country – even holding jobs – without government oversight is scary to a lot of people.

Trying to stop those without the proper papers actually makes the country less safe. When people are branded criminals by the state, both they and the law-enforcers become more dangerous. When desperate, on the run, and unable to make legal redress, actual crimes such as trespassing, stealing, and assault may seem like more attractive options to the illegal immigrant. As for the lawmen, think of all the controls and enforcement powers and equipment that need to be put in place to have even moderate success of keeping people from crossing borders. Don’t forget how the enforcement apparatus can easily be put to other uses with the common occurrence of government mission-creep.

The question may be raised “But how are you going to keep terrorists from entering the country?” Well, first of all, the deadliest terrorists are already here, already know English, and work for various governments. Second, a libertarian America would not pursue empire abroad and would therefore motivate fewer international terrorists. Third, even with a border that would put the Berlin Wall (or Maginot Line) to shame, terrorists will still get into the country if they want to.

Whether we are talking about immigration, drugs, construction, conservation, exploration, medicine, or anything else, the best solution is always to allow people to exercise and defend their rights without the fist of the state being waved in their faces. When people are limited only by the requirement that they do not initiate force upon others, they can create a world of immense prosperity and peace. The libertarian principle of zero-aggression is the guide to the best future possible.

Darian Worden is a senior at Rutgers College and an Editor of The Invisible Hand. See more of his writing at <http://darianworden.tripod.com>

“Sometimes it is said that man can not be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question.” – Thomas Jefferson

On Hurricanes

(continued from page 2)

Many people have moved to the coast, relying on the government to provide these services in good faith. However, it is clear that the end result must be government removing itself from the equation, allowing the free market to once again balance the risks and rewards of living on the coast, permitting individuals to make a rational decision based on these costs and benefits.

The first part of the solution should be to stop writing new flood insurance policies. For those who currently have a flood insurance policy, Congress should allow them to either cash out their policy or to wait until the next time disaster strikes and pay the policy coverage. Current policies should run with the property and expire once a payment has been made to the policy holder, either by cashing out or at the time of a disaster.

Congress should also phase out the mitigation techniques. Congress should phase out support of structures such as the levees and either allow local government—hence only those taxpayers who benefit—to assume control of them, or to destroy them so there is no more reliance on them.

Hurricanes were once an event that local communities were able to handle. Congress has turned them into a national problem affecting every state and every individual. Before Congress stepped in, the market effectively dealt with them, but since the problem has only worsened. We must move toward allowing the market to handle the decision of where one chooses to live, rather than having Congress provide false incentives to relocate.

Brian is a second year law student at the University of Minnesota Law School and a member of the Minnesota Law Review. Before law school, Brian graduated from The Ohio State University, majoring in Computer Science and Engineering. He would like to thank Professor Ann Burkhart and the Minnesota Law Review for their assistance in preparing a Law Review Note similar to this article. He would also like to thank his lovely wife Erin for her love and support in all that he does.

Libertarians Love The Internet!

There are tons of great libertarian websites. Here are some of the editors' favorites:

libertarianism.com

isil.org - International Society for Individual Liberty

lp.org - US Libertarian Party

fff.org - Future of Freedom Foundation

libertyforall.net - Liberty For All

ncc-1776.org - The Libertarian Enterprise

rationalreview.com - Rational Review

groups.yahoo.com/group/libtystudents -

LibertyStudents Yahoo Group

freestateproject.org - Free State Project



“The Libertarian way is a logically consistent approach to politics based on the moral principle of self-ownership. Each individual has the right to control his or her own body, action, speech, and property.”

US Libertarian Party

“In popular terminology, a libertarian is the opposite of an authoritarian. Strictly speaking, a libertarian is one who rejects the idea of using violence or the threat of violence - legal or illegal - to impose his will or viewpoint upon any peaceful person. Generally speaking, a libertarian is one who wants to be governed far less than he is today.”


Dean Russell, Foundation for Economic Education, 1955

The Invisible Hand is a student organized publication with the goal of spreading the ideas of liberty to campuses everywhere.

If you are interested in contributing, visit rlibertarians.tripod.com/ih/handhome.html or email us at

invisiblehandofru@yahoo.com.

We are looking for people interested in anything from writing to artwork to website management.



Where do you stand politically? To find out, take the World's Smallest Political Quiz!

For each statement, circle A for agree; M for maybe; D for disagree.

How do you stand on PERSONAL issues?

- ▶ Government should not censor speech, press, media or Internet.
- ▶ Military service should be voluntary. There should be no draft.
- ▶ There should be no laws regarding sex between consenting adults.
- ▶ Repeal laws prohibiting adult possession and use of drugs.
- ▶ There should be no National ID card.

PERSONAL ISSUE scoring: take 20 for every A, 10 for every M, and 0 for every D: _____

How do you stand on ECONOMIC issues?

- ▶ End "corporate welfare." No government handouts to business.
- ▶ End government barriers to international free trade.
- ▶ Let people control their own retirement: privatize Social Security.
- ▶ Replace government welfare with private charity.
- ▶ Cut taxes and government spending by 50% or more.

ECONOMIC ISSUE scoring: take 20 for every A, 10 for every M, and 0 for every D: _____

Now Find Your Place on the Chart

Mark your PERSONAL score on the lower left scale; your ECONOMIC score on the lower right. Then follow the grid lines until they meet at your political position.

The chart shows the political group that agrees with you most. Liberals tend to value personal freedom. Conservatives tend to value economic freedom. Libertarians value both. Statists are against both.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE QUIZ:
www.TheAdvocates.org

It's an "irresistible political quiz. Find out why it's so popular," says Channel 7 (NBC-TV), San Diego

This chart is adapted from an original concept by David Nolan. The chart, text, and questions are © Advocates for Self-Government

