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Bob Barr

Declaration of Candidacy for the U.S. Presidency – Libertarian Party



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Russ, thank you very much. We are indeed honored to have heading up our team Russ Verney. For those of you who have not had, as I have had, as Jerry have [sic] had, the pleasure of meeting and now working with Russ Verney, he has tremendous experience running not only national campaigns but third-party campaigns as well.

When we searched the length and breadth of the country to find somebody who really could put together a winning effort, who had the winning attitude and who had the knowledge and the background and the history of how to do this, there was one name that was always at the top of everybody's list, and that is Russ Verney. Russ, thank you very much for heading up our effort here. Thank you.

My name is Bob Barr, and I am a candidate for the presidency of the United States of America.

I will be seeking the nomination of the Libertarian Party, for which I am a proud life member. And my wife Jeri is here and one of our sons, Derek, who works with me in my Atlanta office, and a number of other friends and colleagues, many of whom were introduced to you by Russ Verney just a few moments ago.

You might say, "Bob Barr, why are you running for President? Isn't there a field already out there? Don't we already have candidates out there? Aren't the issues already being discussed?"



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Will not there be a fair debate of the issues that are important, not just to the American people today but to their children and their grandchildren?"

And the answer is no, we do not. We do not have a field of candidates, currently or anywhere on the horizon, that understands and will raise the issues that are important to the great heritage of America, the history of this great land, the principles on which this great land was founded, the principles of fiscal conservancy, and who will work dramatically to help reshape this country in the image of our Founding Fathers and in the image of all those who have given so much to preserve liberty and freedom in this land.

And that is why, after very careful consideration, after having traveled many, many miles and many more on the Internet -- taking lessons from my son Derek here, who is the millennial generation and who knows what the Internet is; he has taught me a great deal -- but after having spent, over the last several weeks since we formed our exploratory committee in America's heartland, I have heard from Americans from all walks of life, both here and abroad. I just returned, for example, last evening from a debate in the UK, in the United Kingdom, and met several Americans over there who were students. And I heard the same thing from them as I hear from Americans here in this great land of ours, and that is, they want a choice.

They believe that America has more and better to offer than what the current political situation is serving up to us. And the reason for that is very simple. They believe in America, as I believe in America. We believe in an America that is not and should not be and should never be driven by fear, as current policies on behalf of both parties are in this country. America is a nation formed on courage. It is a nation formed on the power to take risks and to reap the tremendous rewards that come from taking risks.

It is not a country that likes to operate in the cocoon of government power and government stability and government security. Indeed, as one looks across the policy landscape nowadays, one sees not only a lack of discussion of the true problems that face us, and not only superficial solutions that are served up to a somnambulant¹ public, but we see solutions that bear little relationship at all indeed to the principles on which our country was founded, those great constitutional principles that used to have some currency here in Washington, principles such as habeas corpus, the "Great Writ," which has fallen into such disrepute under the current Administration; principles such as separation of powers, which used to stand for that balancing of powers and keeping powers in check, but yet which similarly has fallen into great disrepute in Washington these days on behalf of both parties; principles such as the rule of law rather than the rule of men, which likewise has been discarded as inconvenient and a quaint notion on the part of the current leadership in Washington.

And this has all had the effect of giving us a government that has run amok fiscally, as the American people see their standard of living dropping. They are bothered by the fact, as I am bothered by the fact, that the standard of their government keeps going up. I mean, indeed, the figures speak for themselves. During the first three months, during the first quarter of this year, as American businesses, large and small, were losing nearly 300,000 jobs, guess who was hiring?



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Guess where employment was going up? Government -- to the tune of nearly 80,000 jobs. During that same period of time that Americans were losing their jobs in the private sector, government was hiring with enthusiasm.

The American people are bothered by this. As they see their dollar diminishing in value, both at home and abroad, they see no change in Washington's appetite for their money. The debt is rising to historic levels. The deficit is rising. The budget stands at well over 3 trillion dollars, bloated by such programs as subsidies for agricultural producers, the majority of which go to people and families with incomes in excess of 200,000 dollars.

These things bother the American people. They deserve better. They know they deserve better. I believe they deserve better. And the Libertarian Party deserves they believe [sic] better.

They believe that they deserve a President who will actually stand up to the forces here in Washington, somebody who is not a part of that fraternity that has given us the crop of current candidates, who will stand up, as precious few Presidents previously have, to the powers in Washington that want more, more, more, and say no; who, during his first year in office, his first days in office, will order a freeze on discretionary spending, will then seek to dramatically cut the size, the scope, the power of the federal government, not just in terms of the American taxpayers' dollars that it spends, but in terms of the power of the American individual that it robs.

So this is a brief overview of those reasons that have gone into the decision-making process that bring me here today to our nation's capital to announce my candidacy for the presidency of the United States of America.

I am a competitor. The American people are competitors. For far too long, they have been treated as serfs, not competitors, not peers, not equals. We aim to change this. And with the help of the American people, led by the team that Russ Verney has already begun putting together with Doug Bandow and others that have been introduced to you, and many more, we intend to succeed so that in November America will have and see a President who will then be sworn into office on January 20th of 2009 who believes that power resides and vests and shall be returned to the people of this land, not simply the power over their economic future here in this country, where Americans have seen the standards of living of their children being educated -- diminished -- even as we have an Administration that champions the increase in educational standards in faraway lands.

The American people want to be once again in control of their lives, not beholden to those abroad who loan us money so that we can then engage in adventures overseas.

This will be a difficult process, not just the electoral process but the process of governing, of changing the direction of the ship of state that, under Democrat and Republicans alike, in almost similar measure, cycle after cycle after cycle, has simply added to rather than solved the problems that we currently see before us.



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We appreciate very much you all coming here today, and we'll be delighted to answer any questions that you all have. And as Russ mentioned, if there are questions -- excuse me -- if there are questions that relate to the specifics of the campaign, please see Russ about those. He is in the process of putting together the team that will lead us through not just the Libertarian Party process, which will culminate in just a couple of weeks in the nomination process, which we're confident of winning, but then thereafter over the ensuing months to victory in November.

Thank you.

¹walking, as though asleep; moving about unconsciously