

The Free State Project

“Liberty in Our Lifetime”



The Quill

Watch your mailbox for the Free State vote ballot.

Homeschoolers Debate the Proper Role of Government in a Free Society

By Gregory Rehmke

Over the last fifteen years I have often given free-market talks to high-school speech and debate students.

Three years ago, as I was introduced for my after-dinner talk, the audience was asked how many had read Frederick Bastiat's *The Law*. Nearly one-third had. That *never* happens when I speak to speech and debate students from public and private schools, but then again, this was an audience of homeschooled

students and their parents.

Since then, over 1,000 homeschool debate students and parents have attended our free-market workshops on the economics of each year's national homeschool debate topic. Until recently, I worked at the Foundation for Economic Education (“FEE”), and we held one- and two-day workshops for homeschool debate students in Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

FEE has been sending market-oriented research materials to speech and debate students since the 1950s. FEE's Bettina Greaves was in charge of compiling a collection of articles from *The Freeman* on the year's national high-school debate topic. I was hired by FEE in 1985, and again in 1998, to expand FEE's outreach efforts to high-school speech and debate students. Between 1987 and 1998, I continued to prepare research materials and organize workshops for high-school debaters on the economics of each year's national high-school debate topic while working with the Reason

Foundation, the Knowledge Network Foundation and the Free Enterprise Institute.

Back at FEE in 1998, we expanded our workshops for debaters and eventually launched www.Freespeaker.org, a Web site focused on speech and debate. Yet in 1999, I began to receive e-mails from students asking about debate topics I had never heard of before. Students e-mailed me about the resolution: “Resolved: That America should abolish the income tax.” “Wow,” I thought, “Who are these people?” I replied that I had never heard of this as a debate topic and asked who is debating this. The student replied that this was the national Christian homeschool debate topic!

Since then, homeschool debate topics have been on U.S. immigration policy, agricultural policy, and, last year, on U.S. trade policy with Africa and the Middle East.

Just as homeschooling is growing across the country with thousand of parents attending homeschool fairs in most states, so is the homeschool speech and debate competition growing. Speech and debate competition gives students the opportunity to develop their speaking skills,

to think on their feet, and to improve their research skills. Homeschool Web sites like www.homeschooldebate.com allow students to share and discuss thoughts and ideas on each year's national topic. National Homeschool Legal Defense Fund founded the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association, whose Web site is www.ncfca.org, to guide the rapidly growing homeschool speech and debate community.

This year's national homeschool policy debate topic is “Resolved: That the United States federal government should significantly change its policy toward one or more of its protectorates.” An additional topic

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Welcome to the August edition of “The Quill,” the Free State Project's monthly newsletter! “The Quill” will be published on the Web every month in PDF format, and you are encouraged to print out copies and distribute them in your local community! We welcome suggestions, articles and questions from readers; send these to us at: newsletter@freestateproject.org.

Mary Lou Seymour
The Quill Project Manager

Signed-Up Members
as of
July 27, 2003:
4,867



Gold & Silver

The financial state of the FSP

By Debra Ricketts

Have I told you lately how cool you guys are? On the very day my column last month was published, we discovered the debit card number of our PayPal account had been used illegally. We asked you guys for help and you came through with flying colors!

In less than two weeks' time, y'all donated over

Porcupine Profile — Tom Parker

By Matt Cheselka

Tom Parker is an active, behind-the-scenes sort of guy whose excellent skills and work ethic enhanced greatly the timeliness and quality of the FSP's media, article, essay and endorsement Web page at <http://freestateproject.org/articles.htm/>. Tom is also the media coordinator for his home state of Colorado, where presently he enjoys bicycling, dabbling in songwriting, and doing volunteer work. When he learned of the Free State Project ("FSP") in 2001, he joined because he saw the FSP offering the best chance for liberty in his lifetime.

As a retired computer programmer, he's able to devote time and effort to the FSP, working toward liberty in his lifetime and, as a retiree, not paying any income taxes!

Making the move to the Free State won't be difficult for him and in fact he's looking forward to it. Born in Michigan, he's lived in Arizona, California and Maryland.

Thanks for all the great work you've done for the FSP over the past several months, Tom!

\$13,000. Yes, that's thirteen *thousand* dollars! You guys are amazing! As gravy over those potatoes, PayPal charged back the original \$2,000 that was stolen, leaving us with \$15,000. We've still got a couple of small expenses to pay, but we can handle very comfortably the vote now, especially since EEMBC Certification Laboratories, LLC has volunteered very graciously to certify the vote for free.

I also received much advice on security issues as it relates to finances. Thanks to a generous donor who sent in a very nice shredder, I'm now shredding every piece of paperwork that's discarded — well, actually, my daughter is gleefully doing the shredding. We haven't renewed the PayPal debit card; the common consensus seems to be that a secured credit or debit card through a traditional bank might be a better bet. We're also keeping the PayPal balance very low to dissuade a potential thief.

Finally, we've implemented an alternative payment system for those who don't like PayPal but want to use credit cards. It's called "Click and Pledge," and the icon is on the donation and direct sales page in <http://freestateproject.org/donate.htm/>. Click and Pledge accepts credit card transactions, and then uses an auto-

From The President

By Jason Sorens

Well, here we are — it is finally the month of the vote. As new members continue to swell our membership ranks, we expect to reach 5,000 before August 15, the deadline to sign up and enjoy the right to participate in the vote.

In this issue of *The Quill*, I'll take some time to deal with vote-related issues that I could not deal with in depth in the letter that is included with the ballot mailing going out now.

First, the Condorcet voting. There are several descriptions of Condorcet voting and its advantages on the Web site, but people have believed mistakenly that because it lets you rank all the states, you can vote "strategically" in some way. For example, in a Condorcet election with four candidates, *A*, *B*, *C* and *D*, let's say that you think *A* and *B* are the only ones with a good chance of winning and you prefer *A* to *B*. Some people might think that on your ballot you should mark *A* first, then *C* and *D*, then *B* last, to hurt *B* as much as possible. Nice idea, but this doesn't work. Ranking *B* last doesn't in any way help *A* win; it just helps *C* and *D* relative to *B*, and thus could end up hurting you. To see why this is, think of a Condorcet election as a round-robin tournament. Each candidate "plays" every other candidate. If *A* beats *B*, *C*, and *D*, then *A* wins. It doesn't matter whether *C* beats *B* or *D* beats *B*. Even if *B* beats both *C* and *D*, it cannot win if it loses to *A*. Therefore, when you're voting, marking *A* above *B* is all it takes to help *A* beat *B*, and marking *B* below *C* and *D* doesn't help *A*. If you have another questions about this, feel free to contact me for a more detailed explanation.

Second, the letter that was included with the ballot mailing states that a new president and treasurer will be chosen from the state that wins the vote. As of September 15, the day when the winning state is announced, Debra and I will be resigning respectively as the Free State Project's treasurer and president. In our places, we will select a president and treasurer from the winning state, and reincorporate the Free State Project ("FSP") in that state. While the search is ongoing, Elizabeth, our vice president, will serve as acting president. It's essential to have a president who's a resident of our chosen state for credibility purposes and for the ability to promote the state effectively. Debra and I both plan to remain on the Board of Directors, and I'll retain the title of Chairman of the Board. Moving to a more traditional corporate structure will allow our officers to exercise more independent discretion, while the Board retains ultimate decision-making authority. We're also considering adding a Board of Advisors, consisting of some of our most prominent and experienced members and supporters.

After the vote, the FSP's role will change dramati-

Homeschoolers

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for “value” or “Lincoln/Douglas” Debate is “Resolved: When in conflict, cultural unity in the United States ought to be valued above cultural diversity.”

The protectorates topic is an interesting one. It is not one that is much heard in public policy debate or analyzed by think tanks and public policy research organizations, but since it deals with basic issues of governance, I thought it would be of interest to the Free State Project (“FSP”). Homeschool debaters are asked to propose new forms of governance to current U.S. protectorates such as the American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The same political principles and economic understanding, which would help free these protectorates from the heavy hand of the state, would also help free current U.S. states.

I sent e-mails out to various market-oriented scholars about the protectorates topic and their replies were as follows:

“Trying to set them on a path toward[] genuine independence. That could mean some continued relationship with America in terms of foreign policy, but they should be economically independent. American Samoa is horribly impoverished and heavily dependent on the [United States]. Puerto Rico is also heavily dependent on U.S. funds. So are the variety of other dependencies — they all have slightly different relationships — Guam, Commonwealth of Marianne Islands, etc. Certainly they should try to become low tax, low regulation havens. Maybe libertarians active in the [FSP] could cast their eyes a bit [farther] overseas!” — Doug Bandow, senior fellow at the Cato Institute and author of *Ideas on Liberty*.

“This last avenue [turning them into libertarian utopias] looks promising. Perhaps a more promising (less scary-sounding for the great middle) option would be making them into complete free-trade zones — no tariffs, no quotas, no nothing, just let free trade rip. These places would then flourish to such an extent that they would serve as beacons to the rest of the world! They could become what Hong Kong used to be.” — Robert Higgs, senior fellow at the Independent Institute, editor of *The Independent Review*, and author of *Crisis and Leviathan: Critical Episodes in the Growth of American Government*.

“Good to hear from you and to learn about your work. I can’t recall if the American Founders speak directly to issues involving protectorates, but I think that you are right in suggesting that their principles are a good place to begin in thinking about these matters. If protectorates comprise a ‘people,’ then certainly by their reckoning that people would have a natural right to independence and self-government, and American ‘protection’ would have to be directed toward that end. Introducing students to the rich thought of the Founders is a worthy undertaking, and I wish you all the best in this endeavor.” — Eugene Miller, Univer-

sity of Georgia.

“. . . For example, I can think of a source that is very critical of our annexation of Hawaii. . . . Actually, one case would be to make all of our protectorates independent. One could start with Adam Smith’s argument against colonies and apply it here. Puerto Rico has cost us more, for example, than we have gotten out of the deal.” —

Burton Folsom, senior historian at the Center for the American Idea and author of *Myth of the Robber Barons*.

In July, FEE decided recently to discontinue its outreach efforts to homeschool and high-school students. Furthermore, I was discontinued too, but I expect to start with a new nonprofit foundation in the Seattle soon, and we will continue to expand our education workshops and Web sites for high-school and homeschool speech and debate students.

If you are interested in learning more about the homeschool speech and debate world, just send me an e-mail at grehmke@aol.com or check my Web site, www.freespeaker.org for high-school and homeschool debaters. Christian homeschool debate clubs are always looking for judges for their tournaments, and by judging at a local homeschool debate tournament you will see firsthand how these students are dealing with issues of improving governance of U.S. protectorates. It is my hope that we will be able to convince many that free markets and limited government is good policy for states and protectorates. ☀

Gold & Silver

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mated clearing house (“ACH”) transfer to send the money to our bank account on a monthly (or biweekly) basis.

Thanks again, guys! You’re the best! *Now, let’s vote!* ☀

From The President

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cally. The Free State concept will not need as much selling as the advantages of the strategy will become apparent in our state’s political reality. Instead, our job will be to sell all the advantages of our Free State to freedom-loving people, and sell our people to our state. We’ll want to come out with brochures touting all the advantages of our state, and start or spin off networks and associations organizing volunteer efforts, business opportunities and in-depth local research. The Web site will undergo a total redesign toward these ends.

I’m looking forward to the future; after the vote, the FSP will be in the homestretch as far as recruitment is concerned. Of course, the migration will be just beginning, and after the migration, the political work. But I think we can then all give ourselves a pat on the back and a rousing round of applause for achieving the first major success of our movement. Onward toward the Free State and toward liberty in our lifetimes! ☀

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The Quill

Volume I

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Events Calendar

FREE STATE PROJECT EVENTS

August 11, 2003 — Amanda Phillips will speak with a group of Connecticut Libertarians who are interested in the Free State Project ("FSP"). The meeting is from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Public Library, 255 Main Street, Southington, CT 06489-2509. E-mail tonys@bourdonforge.com for more information.

August 17, 2003 — Monica Granger will address the Libertarian Party of Louisiana convention at the Sheraton Baton Rouge Hotel, 102 France Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802 at 3 p.m.

August 29 – 31, 2003 — A conference in Pierre, South Dakota is in the works for these days. For more information see freestatesd.org/.

LOCAL PORCUPINE GROUPS

Central California Group Monthly Luncheon
Third Saturday of the Month at 11a.m.
Location T.B.A.

Contact Adam J. Bernay at adamjbernay@comcast.net
for more information

Dallas/Ft. Worth Monthly Meeting
Third Saturday of the month.

For time and location, contact Aaron Holding
kesthesculptor@bbnow.net

The FSP-Houston meeting is tentatively set for Friday
September 12th. Please contact:

Eddie_G_Bradford@hotmail.com for more
information or check out the yahoo group FSP-
Houston.

Midwest Porcupines meeting on August 9th at 6:30 p.m.
at the Liberty Diner in Ft Wayne, IN.46808-1321.

Please reply to Zug at ozugo@yahoo.com, with the
number of attendees by Saturday, August 1. If less
than five people confirm their attendance, the
meeting will be canceled, but we don't anticipate that
happening.

The Free State Project

"Liberty in Our Lifetime"

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