



NEWS FROM THE BROWNE FOR PRESIDENT CAMPAIGN

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Harry Browne
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Libertarian Presidential Candidate Harry Browne 'Just Says No' to Federal Campaign Matching Funds

COSTA MESA, Calif.-(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jan. 16, 1996--Libertarian presidential candidate Harry Browne has qualified for federal matching funds...but refuses to take them.

"Campaign matching funds are the political equivalent of welfare," Browne said in a statement issued Tuesday. "Republican presidential candidates denounce welfare and subsidies, but every Republican who qualified for matching funds has his hand out for political welfare and campaign subsidies."

"I 'just say no' to this tax-funded subsidy," said Browne.

The Harry Browne for President campaign has raised over \$575,000 to date from more than 4,400 individual donors -- drawing from all 50 states.

Qualifying for matching funds takes more than just fund-raising, according to Browne's national campaign director Sharon Ayres. The Federal Election Commission requires a candidate to raise \$5,000 per state in at least 20 states. And that \$5,000 must be comprised of donations of \$250 or less.

"Republicans Steve Forbes, Alan Keyes, and Robert Dornan have failed to qualify for matching funds," she noted, "Forbes because he spent too much of his own money, Keyes and Dornan because they've raised too little."

"We have formally requested a Federal Election Commission (FEC) advisory opinion verifying that Harry is eligible to apply for and receive matching funds even though he won't take them," she said.

Why is Harry Browne asking the FEC to verify that he's qualified for matching funds -- when he's refusing to take them?

According to Ayres, it's because "many private and public organizations use matching funds qualification as a criterion for being included in debates or put on presidential primary ballots. For example, last week Delaware changed its law to automatically list on its February primary ballot every candidate qualified for matching funds."

"Even more important," she continued, "is the fact that the Commission on Presidential Debates has specified that qualifying for matching funds will be a criterion for deciding which candidates to include in the October presidential debates."

Harry Browne is a best-selling author whose latest book, WHY GOVERNMENT DOESN'T WORK (St. Martin's Press) is in bookstores nationwide. It is now in its 3rd printing.

Harry Browne is the only Presidential candidate calling for "Huge Tax Cuts Now! Huge Spending Cuts Now! A Balanced Budget Now!"

WHY GOVERNMENT DOESN'T WORK details Browne's plan to:

Immediately end the income tax and shut down the IRS. (What will he "replace" the tax with? Nothing.)

Immediately slash the federal budget by 50%, with further reductions the following years.

Immediately balance the budget.

The book shows how and why to shrink the federal government down to only those functions spelled out in the Constitution -- which would get it completely out of welfare, education, housing, crime control, and regulation. He also proposes privatizing Social Security -- selling off federal assets to buy private retirement annuities for seniors dependent on Social Security.

The Libertarian Party -- America's third largest political party -- has run presidential candidates in every election since its founding in 1971. In 1992, its presidential candidate was on the ballot in all 50 states, and it will repeat that feat in 1996 "despite onerous barriers erected by state governments," according to Ayres. The Libertarian Party has already qualified in 28 states on the way to 50-state ballot status.

Harry Browne

PRESIDENT

LIBERTARIAN IN '96★

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"Why I Won't Take Matching Funds"

by Harry Browne

In late November the Harry Browne for President Campaign became the first Libertarian Presidential campaign ever to qualify for matching funds. Thank you for helping us achieve this milestone.

Libertarians have argued for years over whether a presidential candidate should accept matching funds. The question has always been merely academic. But now we must actually decide.

There are three facets of the question -- moral, strategic, and practical.

1. The moral question: Is it right to accept government funds?

I don't believe so. I have never taken money from the government, and I don't want to start now -- despite the importance of winning the White House.

I realize there are deep feelings and plausible arguments on both sides of this question. And nothing I say can resolve those differences completely. But I won't feel right accepting matching funds.

2. The strategic question: If we take government funds, how will it look to the voters?

In my book, "Why Government Doesn't Work," I set forth a credible plan to swiftly and certainly reduce the federal government from \$1.5 trillion to around \$100 billion. I present arguments for getting the federal government completely out of welfare, education, transportation, housing, crime control, and regulation. I will be presenting this program in radio and TV interviews and in public forums.

I don't want to waste time answering the inevitable question: "If it's wrong for the federal government to subsidize all these activities, why are you taking a campaign subsidy?" There are answers to that question, but they sound contrived and self-serving.

Even more important is the powerful, positive image we create by refusing federal money. It shows we mean what we say about getting government out of everyone's life. We won't accept any handout the government offers.

Frequently on radio shows, callers say: "I think your plan is terrific and I agree with 90% of it. But how do I know I can trust you? How do I know you won't turn out like all the other politicians once you're elected?" Now I can answer: "I've already proven I'm not like the others -- by turning down federal campaign funds. I want the federal government out of your life and your wallet, and I won't make exceptions -- even when I'm offered a cut of the money you've paid in taxes."

3. The practical question: How much would we gain by taking matching funds?

There are considerable misconceptions about matching funds. Many Libertarians think accepting them will automatically put us on an equal footing with the two old parties. This isn't true. Matching funds aren't a big mountain of money for us to play with.

There are two types of campaign subsidies. One is for the general election campaign. The government will give the Republican and Democratic presidential nominees \$60 million each with which to run their general election campaigns. The Libertarian Party will get \$ 0.00, because no subsidy of any size is paid to a party whose presidential candidate received less than 5% of the vote in the 1992 election.

The other subsidy is the matching funds program. The government "matches" donations raised by individual candidates while they are still competing for their parties' nominations. Nothing we raise after the July convention will be matched. And what we raise before then isn't matched dollar-for-dollar. The government will match no more than \$250 of any donor's contribution. And there are further restrictions -- such as that only payments by check or money order are matched (cash or credit-card donations don't count).

Of the money our campaign raised so far, the government would match less than 60%. And if we get into millions of dollars raised, inevitably a larger percentage of the money will come from \$1,000 donations -- of which only \$250 is matched. And the most money will be raised after we've built sufficient name recognition and after the nominee is chosen -- too late to qualify for matching funds.

If we eventually raise \$5 million, for example, the government will add probably no more than \$2 million. If we raise \$10 million, the government might match only about \$3 million. And if we raise \$20 million, we might get only \$4 million or so from the government.

In other words, matching funds can enhance whatever level of campaigning we finance on our own. But matching funds won't propel the campaign to a higher level. Matching funds won't turn an ordinary LP campaign into a big-budget national TV campaign.

And what do those funds cost us? They subject us to an even greater level of government oversight, auditing, and red tape than we face now. The Federal Election Commission is one of the most oppressive government agencies, and accepting matching funds would drive us ever more deeply into its embrace. The FEC has demanded that the Fulani campaign return \$612,557 it received in matching funds in 1992. I don't want that to happen to the LP -- or to me.

In sum, we would pay a great price in principle and strategy for a very small practical benefit. Even if you aren't morally opposed to accepting matching funds, you probably can agree that we would give up a great deal strategically for a very small reward.

We have to realize that no one is going to hand us a magic bullet. No one is going to lift our campaign to a higher level for us. We have to do the job ourselves. But there's a great deal we can do.

If you haven't donated the legal limit to the campaign, please consider setting up a monthly payment program to increase your donation to \$1,000 by next July. (You can contribute up to another \$1,000 after the national convention.)

With "Why Government Doesn't Work" headed for the best-seller list, my name recognition is rising. This will enable us to appeal to business CEOs who can afford to write \$1,000 checks. Please contact businessmen who are reasonably well off and who are sympathetic to libertarian ideas, give them copies of "Why Government Doesn't Work," and ask them to donate \$1,000 and to arrange meetings at which I can speak to their friends and business associates.

Call us at (703) 222-9189 to get involved.

No one is going to provide a Libertarian breakthrough for us. We have to do it ourselves. But we CAN do it ourselves. So let's get started, and let's make America a free country.