

Spoiler Season

October 31, 2018

“Libertarians poll high enough to tip key races,” informs *The Washington Times* — citing contests for governorships and both houses of Congress.*

Libertarian Lucy Brenton is one example, running for U.S. Senate in Indiana. She grabbed 7 percent in a recent poll, greater than the margin between incumbent Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly, who had 44 percent, and Republican challenger Mike Braun with 40 percent. *The Times* says Brenton is just one of “a number of Libertarians whose poll numbers are high enough to more than account for the difference between Republicans and Democrats in key midterm races.”

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She had garnered 5.5 percent in 2016, when she sought the state’s other U.S. Senate seat.

There is disagreement over whether Libertarians help or hurt Republicans. Most folks suspect that Libertarians take votes away from Republicans, but polling appears to show Libertarians snagging more otherwise Democrat-inclined voters.



No matter. As often discussed here, enacting Ranked Choice Voting is the rational institutional solution to the so-called spoiler effect Libertarians present. It’s a win-win for both so-called major and minor political parties.

“Libertarians bristle at the term ‘spoiler,’” the newspaper notes, “saying it’s a belittling term for a party that presents a viable option to voters.”

Which brings me to a second solution to Libertarians luring away your voters. Steal their issues. Take them and make them your own.

There’s no law against it.

No reform required.

“Libertarians are running against President Trump’s tariffs, immigration policy and record on spending . . .” explains *The Times*, and “are embracing . . . less taxation as well as marijuana legalization, criminal justice reform and ending the war on drugs.”

Fresh elections. Happy voting.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.

* *It won't change the outcome, but on Monday the Boston Globe endorsed Libertarian Dan Fishman for state auditor, writing: "An auditor without any partisan axes to grind could shake up the state." That's a different kind of spoiler.*