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March 10, 2011

In 2006, the Daily Kos' Markos Moulitsas claimed he was a "libertarian democrat" and argued in favor of the concept not just at his site, but also at [Cato Unbound](#). I don't agree with a fair amount of what Moulitsas said, as he spends a good deal of time talking about how government is need to protect us from corporations while missing that corporations are only a threat because they're empowered by government. From his 2006 post at [The Daily Kos](#):

The problem with this form of libertarianism is that it assumes that only two forces can infringe on liberty — the government and other individuals.

The Libertarian Democrat understands that there is a third danger to personal liberty — the corporation. The Libertarian Dem understands that corporations, left unchecked, can be huge dangers to our personal liberties.

Libertarian Dems are not hostile to government like traditional libertarians. But unlike the liberal Democrats of old times (now all but extinct), the Libertarian Dem doesn't believe government is the solution for *everything*. But it sure as heck is effective in checking the power of corporations.

In other words, government can *protect* our liberties from those who would infringe upon them — corporations and other individuals.

Kos was wrong then in that corporations primarily derive their abilities *from* government, but the concept of libertarian democrats was intriguing to say the least. Granted, he's abandoned the title and now fully embraces progressivism, but that doesn't surprise me. His ideas on government versus corporations is based on a faulty premise that will invariably lead someone to think of government as a more benign force than it really is.

Some argue that the concept is ludicrous, that the two are almost mutually exclusive. In today's climate, that argument seems pretty valid. However, imagine the old days when Democrats fought for civil liberties. Once upon a time, they didn't target the Second Amendment for deconstruction and vigorously defended all the other parts of the Bill of Rights. There are a few Democrats still floating around with a similar bent to them, but they're rare.

I've often felt that you don't need libertarians in the majority to effect real pro-liberty change. Just a handful would do wonders. However, it wasn't until recently that I pondered the idea of them coming in as both Republicans *and* Democrats rather than through the Libertarian Party. Don't get me wrong, I want to see the LP do well and finally become the viable third party this nation is and has been clamoring for, but principle matters far more than party to me.

But, if I disagree with Moulitsas' assessment of what a libertarian democrat would look like, then how do I see them?

In truth, the difference between a libertarian democrat and a libertarian republican is one of priorities. What hill do they prefer to die on. For a libertarian republican, that hill is most likely economics. For a libertarian democrat, that hill is civil liberties. It's not that either group doesn't share similar opinions to the other, it's simply where the priorities lie. Libertarian republicans will still support free speech, freedom of religion, 4th Amendment rights, and all the other civil liberties that libertarian democrats fight for, just as the libertarian democrats will support the end of the welfare state, ending corporate welfare, low taxes, and all that jazz.

A handful of libertarians, under the two parties, could easily control both chambers of Congress. In a 49-49 split, a mere two senators can essentially run that chamber. In the House, a 215-215 split with five libertarians, and that chamber is in the same predicament. Partisan politics with a few principled libertarians, and you've got something interesting to say the least.

A libertarian democrat can also do something that no regular democrat can do: deliver conservative districts. Let's be honest here, there are a lot of progressive republicans running around. Conservative voters would like to see them hit the road, but their choice is often a liberal democrat or a liberal republican. They tend to deal with the republican. However, a democrat who was genuinely a deficit hawk, pro-gun, pro-small business, and anti-wealth redistribution might have a shot at winning these voters over where even a moderate democrat would struggle.

The idea isn't perfect by any means. The Democratic Party machine seems to have a way of twisting people into embracing a progressive agenda. However, a few do escape to maintain some semblance of their principles. It damn sure isn't [Ralph Nader's belief in a potential libertarian/progressive alliance](#). No, this is something different.

What matters more to me right now [isn't party, but principles](#). If someone stands for what I believe, does it matter what letter falls after his name?