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## Why Republicans should say no to Cuccinelli and Jackson

By David Lampo

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In November, Virginia Republicans face an unpleasant but necessary choice: Vote for their party's nominees for governor and lieutenant governor, or cast a vote instead for the party's future by withholding their support from these problematic candidates.

This year's Republican nominees constitute the party's most far-right ticket in Virginia history. Ken Cuccinelli II, the candidate for governor, built his career on anti-gay, antiabortion and anti-immigrant votes (as a state senator) and legal decisions (as attorney general). While such positions play well with highly conservative voters, more mainstream voters, particularly those with libertarian leanings, need to stop and take stock of Cuccinelli's long-held social views.

Since beginning his campaign for governor, Cuccinelli has understandably tried to appeal to the state's more libertarian voters — a sizable portion of independents — by emphasizing his support for reducing taxes and spending, as well as for gun rights and repealing Obamacare. But his views on a variety of social issues show that he is anything but libertarian. In fact, any association between Cuccinelli and libertarians in voters' minds can only set back this fast-growing political force, not to mention any effort to attract younger voters to the Republican Party. That is reason enough for libertarians to reject his candidacy.

Most libertarians understand that there is more to liberty than just low taxes and the right to bear arms. Regardless of their personal religious views, libertarians (as well as many conservatives) believe in the time-honored principle of separation of church and state: not just freedom of religion but freedom from religion for those who so choose. Given their fundamental belief in social tolerance, the last thing libertarians should want is a government based on what many conservatives refer to as "biblical principles," yet that seems to be what Cuccinelli wants to give us. Most principled libertarians do not believe that the government should oppose equal rights for gay and lesbian Virginians simply because some religions consider homosexuality sinful; such a view is a complete repudiation of the live-and-let-live basis of libertarianism.

Cuccinelli's record on this is awful, including: opposition to repealing the state sodomy law, declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court 10 years ago; opposition to allowing private firms to offer health and life insurance benefits to employees' domestic partners; opposition to expanding Virginia's anti-discrimination law to cover state employees who are

gay; opposition to protections for gays and lesbians working at Virginia colleges and universities; opposition to domestic partnerships or civil unions for gay and lesbian couples; support for taxpayer funding of private adoption agencies that discriminate against gay and lesbian Virginians; and support for a law making divorce more difficult, potentially trapping people in unhappy marriages.

These statist views are simply not consistent with the core Republican and libertarian values of limited government and personal freedom. Rather, they are the views of someone more interested in telling you what to do based on his beliefs rather than in protecting your right to make your own choices.

The Republican candidate for lieutenant governor, pastor E.W. Jackson, is worse. He has never held elected office: His claim to fame is a history of extreme statements about people he dislikes. He has labeled gays as “perverted” and “very sick,” disparagingly said the president has the “sensibilities of . . . an atheist and a Muslim,” and compared Planned Parenthood to the Ku Klux Klan. He told a conference of conservatives in June that “freedom doesn’t mean ‘do whatever you want.’ ” Apparently, when it comes to running your life, it’s his way or the highway, the very antithesis of limited government and individual rights.

That Jackson was nominated as a Republican candidate for statewide office with barely a whisper of opposition from mainstream Republicans is a searing indictment of the leadership of the party in Virginia and points out the need for mainstream rank-and-file Republicans to take a stand.

Unfortunately, the best way to do that is to say no to the party’s two top candidates this November, whether by voting for another candidate in these two races or not voting at all. Perhaps then mainstream Republicans and conservatives will stop pandering to the intolerant wing of our party and instead work to broaden the party by appealing to independents, libertarians and younger voters — our future, if we are to have one. That would indeed be something to celebrate.

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