



August 23, 2009

## Cato rally stirs up crowd

### Raises questions about government

*Mike McWilliams*

The federal government has increasingly involved itself in matters that should be left up to the states or individuals to decide, the chairman of a Washington-based Libertarian think tank told a crowd Saturday in Clyde.

"If there's no Constitutional authority, the federal government must step aside and leave that up to the states or private parties," Robert Levy, chairman of the Cato Institute, said of medical malpractice reform. "That was the original design, but that's not what's transpired.

"Today, the federal government has immersed itself in matters ranging from public schools, to hurricane relief, to drug enforcement, to welfare, to our retirement system, to medical care, to family planning and on and on."

Levy spoke to about 400 people gathered at Haywood Community College's Beall Auditorium. The speech was part of a rally organized by local members of the 9-12 Project, a movement started by Fox News host Glenn Beck.

"It's a nonpartisan group of like-minded people that are really interested in bringing the representation back to representative government, improving communication with our elected officials and letting them know what we expect of them," said Bruce Gardner, a local 9-12 Project member. "It appears that the elitism and the arrogance that we're seeing doesn't represent us — it's representing both political party leaderships as well as special interests."

Levy's speech focused primarily on Supreme Court decisions that he said has allowed government to grow at the expense of individual rights. Some of the cases Levy discussed concerned eminent domain, the right to bear arms, Social Security and due process.

The case over eminent domain allowed private property to be seized for what the court said served "public purpose," by increasing the tax base and creating jobs. Most states have since passed laws that limit the use of eminent domain, Levy said.

"Government should not be authorized to take that home and turn it over to somebody else," Levy said. "Those abuses of power can be minimized only if the court, the Supreme Court in particular, ensures that the legislative and executive branches are bound by the chains of the Constitution, and the Supreme Court has been occasionally derelict in fulfilling that obligation."

Local 9-12 Project member Lynda Bennett hoped the event would educate the public about the group, which she thinks has been unfairly portrayed in the media.

"They are implying that we are not the center of the country," said Bennett, a registered unaffiliated voter. "The people you see here are very much the middle of the road."

Bill Sterrett, a Democrat, said elected officials need to be held accountable to the people, through open and honest dialogue.

“If we can have an honest dialogue, we find that we have a lot in common,” Sterrett said.

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