

Third parties denied invitations to debates

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The upcoming presidential debates will feature just two of the candidates running for president of the United States.

Though many believe them to be the only candidates in the race, the list actually includes many others. Among the candidates, a large amount of attention has been given to Libertarian Party nominee Harry Browne, Reform Party nominee Pat Buchanan, Green Party nominee Ralph Nader and John Hagelin of the Natural Law/Independent Party.

Most of the attention has been paid to Republican nominee Gov. George W. Bush and Democratic nominee Vice President Al Gore. But studies have shown a growing sentiment that criticizes the prominence of the Republican and Democratic parties in both Congress and the presidency. A Gallup/CNN/USA Today poll showed that 67 percent of Americans want

a strong third party movement that would run candidates for president, congress and state officials.

Ralph Nader is running as the nominee of the Green Party but is drawing support from a number of liberal organizations. His platform is more



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Libertarian Party candidate Harry Browne supports a plan that would eliminate the federal income tax.

oriented toward domestic issues such as campaign finance reform, health care and trade.

"We must end the dominance and corruption of our political system by the influence of big money," Nader has said. "Year after year big business invests in politicians and political parties by giving them millions of dollars, and in return those businesses get corporate welfare and tax breaks worth billions of dollars. This must end."

Nader also believes that the United States should withdraw from the North

American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization. After this withdrawal, he said that we should "negotiate new agreements that put the interests of workers, consumers and the environment above those of multinational corporations."

On the subject of health care, he argues that it is possible to provide full medical coverage for all Americans. Nader has come out against the prison industry and certain trends in U.S. foreign policy. Of foreign policy, he has said, "We always seem to side with the dictators and the oligarchs and never with the peasants and the workers."

Nader said that this foreign policy methods would be to "wage peace" and to anticipate conflicts, thus making our military actions less reactionary. Nader has continually criticized Bush and Gore for being unable to act independently of corporate influence and has promised that, if elected, he would.

Harry Browne of the Libertarian party is running on a platform of smaller government and individual liberty. Browne

has said, "I want to get government out of your life, so that you're free to make your own decisions, manage your own earnings, and live as a free, sovereign individual — not as a dysfunction-

ional child who must be guided, managed and cared for by an all-powerful government."

Browne claims that, if elected, he would free Americans from the income tax and make the federal government "so small that it can handle its constitutional functions with just the tariffs and excise taxes already being collected." He has criticized other candidates for wanting too much control of the lives of the American public and said that he would end Social Security. He supports the return of all U.S. troops from



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Consumer advocate and Green Party presidential nominee Ralph Nader is currently third in voters' polls for president, but he, like other third party candidates, was not invited to participate in debates sponsored by the Commission on Presidential Debates.

overseas service, the repeal of gun laws and promises to protect Americans from the intrusion of public officials.

Pat Buchanan has long been a major figure in the Republican party. He is considered by many to be the most conservative of the major candidates in the election, now running on the Reform Party ticket. Buchanan has come out

against the FDA's legalization of the abortion drug RU-486, calling it a "new page in America's national tragedy" and continuing to say that "no Buchanan agency or appointee will compromise the right to life." Buchanan also criticizes present systems of government spending which he deems "out of control." Furthermore, he proposes to bring U.S. troops home and criticizes U.S. foreign policy.

"Why are we shoveling all this money into China," he asked, "Why don't we wait and at least find out what their intentions are?" He has also said that he is for a renegotiation of NAFTA and would reduce legal immigration to 25,000 people per year.

Iowa physicist, John Hagelin is running on the ticket of the Natural Law/Independent Coalition. Much of his platform is based on reducing taxes through progressive policies on crime,

health care and education. He has said that he believes in "cutting taxes deeply and responsibly through cost effective solutions to crime, spiraling health costs and other social problems not through cutting essential services."

Hagelin pledges to use as president a common sense problem-solving strategy that he has honed after a

career in science. He plans to encourage more efficient uses of energy in order to limit damage to the environment. Hagelin, who received his master's and doctorate degrees in physics from Harvard University, believes that people can solve America's problems through the logical methods of a scientist.

Most of these candidates have expressed distress at not being included in the debates. Buchanan has cited a mentality among Americans that he feels has contributed to his exclusion.

"Americans are just so blasé. We are living in unserious times. It's almost like the '20s," Buchanan has said.

Third party candidates have struggled in the past and continue to do so to gain national attention and exposure. The upcoming debates will not include them, and many citizens are expected to publicly demonstrate along with these candidates against what they see as an unfair format for the presidential debates.

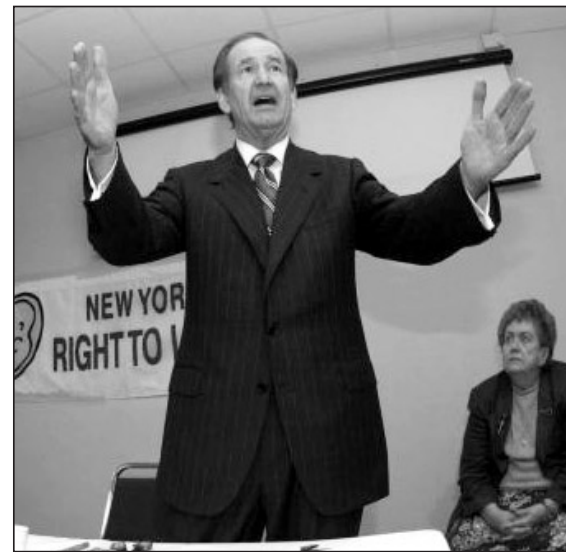


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Conservative Pat Buchanan, a former Republican, is running as the Reform Party's nominee.

Third party nominees and Web sites

Ralph Nader (Green Party):
www.votenader.com

Pat Buchanan (Reform Party):
www.buchananreform.org

Harry Browne (Libertarian Party):
www.harrybrowne.org

John Hagelin (Natural Law/Independent Coalition): www.hagelin.org

Howard Phillips (Constitution Party):
<http://www.constitutionparty.com>

David McReynolds (Socialist Party):
www.votesocialist.org

Robert M. Bowman (Independent Party):
www.bowman2000.org

More on these and other third party candidates can be found at www.govote.com.