

DISTRICT 1 STATE REPRESENTATIVE, SEAT A

Profile of Bob Vickaryous



By Ben Olson
Reader Staff

Editor's Note: Bob Vickaryous is running as a Democrat in the primary election for State Representatives, Seat A.

Sandpoint Reader: Tell me a little about your history in North Idaho.

Bob Vickaryous: I was born in Creston, B.C. My folks were both U.S. citizens, but it was the closest hospital. I had some farming blood in me, and I'm interested in being independent. I have an independent nature. I never really liked having somebody look over my shoulder. I logged for about 30 years, logged and farmed at same time.

SR: What inspired you to run?

BV: There is a need for some pro-liberty minded people in the state legislature. And if I get nomination I'd like to be one of those, to help make decisions on the con-con (constitutional convention). I believe it's a very, very bad thing to have one at this point in time. If we need to amend the Constitution, we can do it the traditional way it's been done the past 200 years. We don't have to open it up to having the whole thing rewritten like happened last time. Not enough people realize that, and I'd like to be part of that discussion, and do what I can to help derail it.

SR: What specifically about the constitutional convention is it that concerns you? Are you concerned it would be opened up to dramatic change?

BV: Yeah, in fact, that's what some proponents are promoting and hope

**Bob Vickaryous
AT A GLANCE**

AGE: 71

BIRTHPLACE AND RESIDENCE: Born in Creston, B.C., lives 1.5 miles south of Canadian border.

GOVERNMENT SERVICE: Served on school board in 1990s. Six years in U.S. Army (two active, four reserve).

PROFESSION: Small time cattle rancher-cow, calf operation.

EDUCATION: Public high school.

FAMILY: Married to spouse since 1993.

FUN FACT: Bob has been interested in politics since 1966. He spent 13 months on the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea when he was stationed there in the Army.

happens. That's a reason they want a convention. They want the whole thing scrapped and completely rewritten. If it was completely rewritten by the majority of those involved, it would probably look an awful lot like the constitution of the Soviet Union. People are granted rights, and then the right is negated by the government, which has the ability to regulate the right, which makes it not a right at all. That concerns me. I want to see the country remain free. I don't want to see a socialist dictatorship.

SR: When you ran in the 2016 primary as a Democrat, it came up often where many said your views were quite conservative. I'm curious why you're running again as a Democrat as opposed to a Republican or other.

BV: I feel that the identity of Democratic party has been stolen. Traditionally, from the beginning, the Democratic party was very conservative, pro-Constitution, pro-freedom, all the way until about the 1920s and '30s when the socialists, who used to have their own candidate running for president every year, decided they could make a lot more progress by simply taking over Democratic party and running their candidates pretending to be Democrats when they were actually socialists. I think that needs to be reversed, and I'd like to help reverse it.

SR: Let's talk about your association with the John Birch Society (JBS). Generally, the JBS is known as an anti-communist, limited-government society. Why are you a proponent of this group?

BV: I haven't been as active in the JBS, especially in Sandpoint, as I'd like to be. You've done a little homework, it sounds like. I have been a member since 1972, and I strongly believe in an informed electorate. The only way that we're ever going to get the country on the right track again is to have an electorate that understands the basic concept of freedom. The Democratic party was founded on those basic principles, same as the JBS. It's nothing new. I'm not trying to reinvent freedom, we're just trying to keep it.

SR: If you were to identify three of your main issues, what would those be and why?

BV: The con-con issue is one, we already talked about that. I strongly believe in free enterprise in health care and free enterprise in education.

SR: Define "free enterprise." What exactly does that entail for health care and education?

BV: If you had free enterprise in

education, you would have the people making their own decisions regarding those topics. That's where it needs to be. When you get the government involved in anything, it denies the people the right to make their own decisions regarding health care and education. I believe that competition always produces excellence, so if you want excellence in health care or education or anything else, you have to let the free market work. You have to let the people decide.

SR: You have been an opponent of public education in the past. At one point in the 1990s, you wrote a letter to the editor that asked, "Do we even need public schools anymore, and if we do, how do we pay for it? I don't think we need them." Do you seek to abolish the public education system?

BV: I would rather it abolish itself and let the people get tax credits that want to educate their kids at home or in private schools or wherever. They shouldn't have to pay for both. That would stimulate the private sector. People don't realize how much education is costing them, how much it's costing them to get misinformation, or disinformation. It's very costly to have erroneous information. I could talk a while about all of these things. ... The problem is, whenever you have government involved in things like education, you come up with indoctrination instead of education. We don't need indoctrinated Hitler-type youth. We need people who understand the concept of freedom.

SR: So you think the neither the state nor the federal government should be funding education at all?

BV: I don't think our government should be involved at all. In fact there's nowhere in the Constitution where it's allowed for the federal government to be involved.

SR: Don't you think that might leave some people out in the cold, without access to an education?

BV: No, I don't think so at all. I'm not a computer nut, but kids are brought up to understand computers and they can find information in a heartbeat while us older folks who haven't been well-schooled in computers have a disadvantage. The technology is there to get a good education online, and kids know how to use a computer. Schools have neglected teaching the kids to read and write cursive. I just found that out when I hired a young lad to do a website for me. I wrote out everything I wanted on the website, and he was stumped because he couldn't read cursive. Reading and writing should be taught, as well as

how to type.

SR: I'm curious. You say that a good education is available on the internet, but with a system like the one you're proposing, who is going to be generating this content on the internet?

BV: I think people really believe in education in Idaho, and it's not compulsory that they send kids to public schools but people do it because they believe the kids are getting a good education. They're being fooled. They believe in education. If they understood what was out there as an alternative there would be more people getting their kids educated at home. The JBS does have an online course called Freedom Project Academy. For anyone who wants a good, solid education, that would be a good place to start. If they don't like the concept of freedom and want socialism, they could start their own socialistic schools, or just keep sending their kids to public school.

SR: You've talked a lot about socialism. Is that a concern of yours? That we are becoming a socialist country?

BV: Yeah, it has been my concern for quite a while. When you look at what Karl Marx wrote, as far as a prerequisite for a socialist, communistic society, one of the things you absolutely have to have is the government controlling the way people think. They do that by controlling education. That's why he put that in there. A free government education for everybody. He knew what it would do. And also you have to have an income tax to finance all the government programs, you have to have a centralized banking system, inheritance tax. Those are all planks of the communist manifesto, and they're all in place in America.

SR: You believe we should abolish income tax? How would we replace that? How would we fund things like the military, social programs, roads?

BV: Well, road funding is already in place, it's called a fuel tax. That's where the money comes from to build roads. I believe in a user fee tax. I'd really like to see, if there's not enough road tax to build a bypass in Bonners, I'd like to see a toll bridge put in, or a toll bypass, so that truckers don't add to traffic congestion. I think people would opt to pay an extra dollar or two to bypass Bonners Ferry just like they bypass Sandpoint.

SR: This is a pretty divisive time in our history. If elected, how will you reach any common ground with your



(No Photograph Submitted)

constituents, or are you catering to one political ideology over another?

BV: Well, if you call being for freedom favoring an ideology, I'd be happy to spend more time getting people to understand the concept of freedom. It doesn't seem like they do. If people want free goodies all through their life, they'll end up totally controlled and without freedom. It's up to the people to make a choice. I don't think that people fully understand the concept of freedom.

SR: Is there anything we haven't covered that you'd like to end with?

BV: We didn't talk about gun-free school zones. I think that we should have a gun in every classroom and a well-qualified teacher to use it if necessary. It's these gun-free school zones, you may have noticed, where the idiots go to take out their frustration or whatever they're doing, to shoot innocent people. They don't go to a police station. If they knew that there was a loaded gun waiting for them in a classroom, they would probably think twice. If we can trust the teachers with the minds they use, we should be able to trust them with the responsibility to protect them with a gun.

SR: I'm curious where the funding would come from to pay for this. You've already called for an end for government funds in education. Who pays for these guns?

BV: If they can't find enough money in the budget, I'm sure the NRA would probably take up a collection — or the John Birch Society, either one — to make sure there's enough money to buy a gun. If they can bus kids all over the state for a basketball game, I'm sure they could find enough money to buy a \$150 weapon.