

# *To Hawthorn Friends & Family -*

Two topics seem to merit comment – if only as a distraction from all our isolation – on this lovely spring day in the nation’s embattled capital:

## **A Libertarian Candidate Emerges . . . or, at least, is “exploring” --**

Republican-turned-Independent Congressman **Justin Amash** – the only non-Democrat to vote to impeach President Trump and from the all-important presidential swing state of Michigan – has formed an **exploratory committee to run for president** as the **Libertarian Party** candidate.

His potential impact on whom ELSE is elected president (i.e. Trump or Biden, as Amash certainly will NOT be) is covered in a well-written, data-driven piece in the [WASHINGTON POST](#) by Aaron Blake.

But none of the analyses I’ve read notes the most important point: As of March 31, **Amash reported only \$644,622.26** cash on hand in his congressional re-election account. That’s not enough to get re-elected to congress, let alone run for president.

Just the cost of qualifying on 50 states ballots would vastly exceed that. Of course, his Leadership PAC has another \$16,106 and his “Country Above Party” Super PAC has \$3,695, a combined total of another \$19,801, less than the cost of one charter airplane trip.

Maybe he can bolster that with Bernie Sanders-like grassroots fundraising, but I doubt it.

A one-time fellow toiler in the political vineyard, Jerry Vento, now a wildly successful entrepreneur, said something nearly 40 years ago that remains profoundly true, *“Whatever they SAY they’re talking about in a political campaign, what they’re REALLY talking about is money. And the more they insist money has nothing to do with it, it has everything to do with it.”*

However, as Aaron Blake notes, Amash COULD tip Michigan away from Biden.

So why is he doing this? Best guess from one of my more insightful colleagues is that he probably can’t win re-election to his House seat and this just might get him an audition as a “talking head” for a network that could use a Republican-turned-Independent.

The best advice Amash could be offered right now is, *“Congressman, I knew Ross Perot. And you’re not even another Ross Perot.”*

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## Yesterday's Elections --

Elections yesterday provided more experience with **vote-by-mail**, but the outcomes provided few surprises, except for the **margins** of some victories.

Mail voting went smoothly in **Maryland** – which really worked to encourage it – but faced major obstacles, including confusion, in **Ohio**. Even in Maryland, election authorities received back only 23% of the ballots they mailed out.

In **Maryland**, with 270 of 313 precincts reporting, former Congressman **Kweisi Mfume** won re-nomination by 73% - 27% to the seat he held for 10 years before leaving congress to head the NAACP, the seat held since his resignation by the late Congressman Elijah Cummings.

In **Ohio**, in a campaign dominated by healthcare issues, former healthcare executive **Kate Schroder** defeated Air Force veteran Nikki Foster by 68% - 32%, setting up a strong challenge for Republican Congressman Steve Chabot, who was held the seat for 24 of the last 26 years, losing in his first bid in 1988 and losing a re-election bid in 2008, but winning the seat back in 2010.

Of perhaps more national significance in Ohio was the **wipeout of the “Progressive” challenge to Rep. Joyce Beatty**, who, with strong support from the Black Caucus, won re-nomination 68.3% - 31.7%.

This was one of a series of largely “windmill-tilting” challenges the AOC/Green New Deal/Progressive forces have launched against minority members, including **Rep. Lacy Clay** (D-MO) in his 2018 primary, which he won 56% - 37%. He will face the same challenger in August 2020 and is likely to win by an even greater margin.

Best advice to these so-called “progressives,” is a lesson Bernie Sanders MAY (in the unlikely event he can be taught anything) have finally learned: *“Making progress requires, first, winning elections.”*

**John**