



In the minds of many political observers, today may indeed be historically significant. But in the minds of ordinary citizens this should also be a sad day for our democracy.

Today, three very powerful institutions, the Republican party, the Democratic Farmer/Labor party, and the Minnesota media are conspiring to limit the hard earned rights of ordinary citizens to rise up and compete for elected office without having to be a Democrat or Republican.

In 1996, Dean Barkley was a candidate for the United States Senate on a third party ticket from Minnesota. In that election he earned more than five percent of the vote and according to Minnesota law earned major party status for his party.

This bit of historical fact seems to have been forgotten—or just simply ignored—by the Democrats, the Republicans and the media.

Today, I am making an appointment to the United States Senate to fill the vacant seat of Senator Paul Wellstone, and you can be assured, I have not forgotten.

My appointee is as qualified to serve the people of Minnesota as any Democratic or Republican.

In fact, if you consider life experiences outside of government and politics, my appointee may be better qualified than either of the two major party candidates.

My appointee is a person of the highest integrity, has a keen sense of what is in the best interest of ordinary Minnesotans, and will put the people's interest before the party's interest.

Ladies and gentlemen meet the interim United States Senator from Minnesota: Independence Party member Dean Barkley.

Thank you.