

Saturday, March 12, 2005

Joining the insurrection

The McCain-Feingold Insurrection

Oh, I know. I'm minor. I'm a nonpartisan libertarian. I'm not the sort of person who'd quote or link to a candidate's press releases or a party's site. They'd have to imprison hundreds, maybe thousands of bloggers before my name would rise to the first page of the priority list. And I don't intend to go out of my way to provoke them. Gandhi or Martin Luther King I most emphatically am not.

But I will not submit. The first political controversy in which I ever became involved was over free speech online. That's what taught me that the two major parties are not to be trusted. When I cried foul over CDA, my offline friends and family laughed...they said "oh, no...the First Amendment is about POLITICAL speech...and no one's ever going to attempt to ban THAT...not in AMERICA...and if they did, it would NEVER survive the courts!".

When McCain-Feingold was passed, and I went back to the same people, expecting them to eat their words and join me in charging the metaphorical barricades, the verses changed a bit ("no no no...Campaign Finance Reform is about MONEY...and money isn't speech!") but the refrain was the same ("you're just paranoid...they'll never come after the rights of individuals to speak freely").

Now this. A federal judge has ruled that the law must be applied even to noncommercial internet speech by individuals. It will shortly be against federal law to publicly state your opinion for or against a candidate for office within 60 days of a national election (unless of course you work for a major media conglomerate...THEY got a special exemption).

In some ways I look forward to seeing how those same friends and relatives react to this news. Will they be able to rationalize it and continue to bury their heads in the sand? Do we absolutely have to have martyrs to the cause sent to prison before offline people will realize that the political class is at war against ordinary citizens?

We shall see.

But like the other members of the "McCain-Feingold Insurrection", this is my line in the sand. I won't change the kind of blog I run in order to deliberately provoke a test case, but nor will I censor myself. And if by some (remote) chance they do come for me, I intend to go down fighting.

So help me God.

Posted by Matt at 05:00