

Let Freedom Ring!

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LP Convention Restores Dues Platform Is Amended

Redpath, Moulton, Sullentrup, Neale are National Officers

Massachusetts State Convention September 23, Worcester MA

In June 2006 a committee was appointed by the State Committee to organize the next State Convention. Bylaws and other constraints have set the date of this convention to be Saturday September 23, 2006, 10:15 AM at Tweed's Pub on Grove Street in Worcester. There is a hotel in walking distance for persons who cannot travel by motor vehicle on Saturday. The convention registration fee is \$28 for LPMA members, including an Italian buffet lunch. Send registrations to Stephanie Woiciechowski, 4 Carp Road, Milford, MA 01757, checks payable LPMA.

Expected convention speakers are
The Honorable Donald Gorman, LPNH, "Why New Hampshire Democrats are doing well and what we can learn from them"
Mr. Stephen Gordon, LNC Communication Director, on new LNC programs.

Two Days of Committee meetings and a two-day business session kept national convention delegates busy hour after hour, day after day. I arrived early and started with the Bylaws Committee, which uniformly felt that *zero dues* violated the Bylaws, as witness the large number of points where zero dues forced changes in the current Bylaws. The Bylaws Committee agreed on a new status *Sustaining Member* (anyone who has paid the LNC \$25 in the past year, or is a life member.)

I arrived Wednesday afternoon. There is one Hilton in Portland, with two buildings on diagonally opposite street corners. Rumors of sky bridges between hotel towers had no visible physical basis. Portland is a very pleasant city, with relatively light downtown traffic, clean and well-maintained.

The Platform committee met for a day and a half. The first morning was devoted entirely to the im-
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Where Your Money Went

For the Libertarian National Committee: One could propose that LNC income has leveled off at 80 or 90 thousands dollars a month, plus annual report and convention special income. The convention lost some money; the banquet fundraiser raised \$27,000, announced as raising money to pay for the convention losses.

Month	Income	Net	Cash	Debt
November	76	-35	-17	66
December	81	3	-14	110
January	93	25	11	140
February	97	-3	8	138
March	150	-4	4	128
April	106	0	4	110
May	115	11	15	116

Should the LPMA Pursue Major Party Status Now?

At the National Convention, several of us myself included were approached by people who wanted to run a candidate for State Treasurer in Massachusetts, and who were willing to pay for the petitioning effort. The conceptual idea was that there was no Republican in the race, and therefore with minimal effort we would be able to get 3% of the vote and regain major party status, with all the consequences that major party status entails. To the best of my knowledge, there is no candidate. However, there was significant debate on this question in the major Massachusetts libertarian yahoo groups ma-liberty and masslp (at yahoogroups.com). I reproduce by permission aspects of the discussion:

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migration plank, which the chairman of the Platform Committee felt to be defective. It was understood that the platform retention vote might be close, so Platform then concentrated on improving the Platform by consolidation planks and eliminate redundant language.

In addition to the standing committees, various caucuses met. From what I saw, the largest was Carl Milsted's Libertarian Reform Caucus, whose meeting had around 40 people in attendance. Other caucuses had rather fewer people in attendance. There had been no effort to arrange a debate between National Chair candidates, so I set one up. So far as I could tell, the LRC has a list of several dozen platform planks it did not want to retain.

The convention proper opened Saturday morning. Fewer than 300 delegates had registered, a number that gradually increased as time went on. Emily Salvette and committee had done the hard, thankless task of validating everyone's registration; Convention registration ran so far as I saw flawlessly. Delegates who bought a package were presented with an elegant leather zipper binder with a wide variety of components. The outside was embossed Badnarik for Congress, because the Badnarik Congressional campaign paid a very substantial amount for the advertisement. Some prominent libertarians were visibly upset, because this was money unlikely to reach Badnarik's constituents effectively.

I had to be in a substantial number of different places, so my coverage of what happened has modest gaps. The first substantial agenda item was the Platform Retention vote, which allowed delegates to vote yes or no on the 60+ platform planks. The preambles were not discussed, and were presumptively up for amendment, but were not subject to retention.

The national officers reported. Treasurer Nelson showed that the financial situation is much as I have reported it in these pages in the past. Memberships and income are way down. One could propose that we have bottomed out to a new level, roughly where we were 12 years ago. The Treasurer's report included the complaint that we have too many single men in attendance, a comment that, to put it mildly, went over poorly with the GLBTQ attendees, and their non GLBTQ friends.

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The Bylaws Committee made a series of reports. The Bylaws were altered to create the new category of *Sustaining Member*, someone who has signed the Pledge and given us at least \$25 in the past year or who is a life member. Sustaining Memberships will be counted to help determine delegation sizes. Later in the convention, Steve Dasbach offered a motion, which passed, to reduce the total number of delegates assigned various states by 1/3, from about 1500 to about 1000, with no change in formula. With three hundred delegates there were not vast numbers of empty chairs; if all 600+ delegates approved by credentials had appeared, they could not have sat. So far as I can determine, the site was totally incapable of handling the 800 delegates of some prior conventions, let alone the 1500 delegates who could in principle appear. My own Massachusetts started with two delegates, Rob Power and I, and added a third, Rene Ruiz from eastern Massachusetts.

The Bylaws committee submitted a change in the bylaws retention voting process, which passed. A major rationale for the alteration was that planks are always retained. Under the new scheme, each delegate will have up to five votes, each for eliminating a plank. Any plank supported for deletion by 4% of the votes is deleted.

The platform Committee recommended consolidation of a series of planks with overlapping language. None of the proposals were supposed to be changed, but things were reshuffled. There was some concern on the part of Gay Rights activists that all Gay Rights issues would be shuffled into a single plank, which could then be deleted. I gather that this issue was dealt with in a manner that avoided those concerns.

There was a prolonged debate over the immigration plank. I hope next month to have a final report on what was actually passed. There was a substantial debate over the Pledge requirement. A majority of delegates, but not 2/3s, so far as I could tell, voted to eliminate the Pledge, which during debate was given a wide variety of contradictory interpretations. David Nolan, who wrote the pledge, was not there to comment on what he had had in mind when he wrote it. A proposal to reword the pledge by rephrasing 'cult of the omniscient state' as 'ideology of the all-powerful state' did not quite attain the needed 7/8 positive vote.

In the end, there was a report on Platform retention. If I heard correctly, almost every plank was voted out. I thought I heard the number voted out as 58. Some of these Planks had already been amended, so those planks were retained. In addition, the preambles were left in place. The next day, we did the Restoration vote. The purpose of the restoration vote was to give delegates a chance to restore planks that had been deleted. Four planks, namely the planks on ending the Drug War, maintaining the right to keep and bear arms, freedom of religion, and freedom of communications, were restored.

There were elections for the officers.

Chair
Redpath 182
Hancock 66
Phillies 26

Vice Chair

Round 1
Moulton 117
Carling 96
Ryan 71
NOTA 3

Round 2
Moulton 169
Carling 105

Secretary Sullentrup unopposed

Treasurer

Neale 191
Nelson 77
NOTA 12

At Large LNC Members:

Admiral Michael Colley 251
Angela Keaton 231
Patrick Dixon 212 TX LP Chair, not to be confused with Mike Dixon, outbound LNC chair
Jeremy Keil 175
Dan Karlan 149
Above were elected. Also running were Deryl Martin, Morey Straus, and M Carling.

Unlike 2002, there were no identifiable efforts to bring in crews of carpetbaggers to pad delegation votes.

Courtesy poster infojunkie on hammeroftruth.com the final platform (some explanations mine) is:

- I.1 Freedom and Responsibility
- I.2 Crime with I.3
- +I.4 The War on Drugs
- +I. 10 Freedom of Communication
- +I. 11 Freedom of Religion
- * I.12 Property Rights >- III.9, IV.D.3, IV.C.3
- * I.13 The Right to Privacy
- +* I.16 The Right to Keep and Bear Arms
- I.17 Conscription
- I.18 Immigration
- I.20 Reproductive Rights (III.5 interspersed)
- I.22 Sexuality and Gender
- II.5 Government Debt
- II.6 Corporate Welfare, Monopolies and Subsidies (now with parts from 2.7, 2.9, 3.13)
- II.9 Public Services >- III.13
- *indicates approved by over 50% of delegates for retention on the first vote
- >- indicates consolidation (the listed amendment includes parts from elsewhere)
- + indicates approved by over 50% of delegates for retention on the second vote

These are interspersed with the Preamble, which still reads

"As Libertarians, we seek a world of liberty; a world in which all individuals are sovereign over their own lives, and no one is forced to sacrifice his or her values for the benefit of others.

We believe that respect for individual rights is the essential precondition for a free and prosperous world, that force and fraud must be banished from human relationships, and that only through freedom can peace and prosperity be realized.

Consequently, we defend each person's right to engage in any activity that is peaceful and honest, and welcome the diversity that freedom brings. The world we seek to build is one where individuals are free to follow their own dreams in their own ways, without interference from government or any authoritarian power.

In the following pages we have set forth our basic principles and enumerated various policy stands derived from those principles.

These specific policies are not our goal, however. Our goal is nothing more nor less than a world set free in our lifetime, and it is to this end that we take these stands.

Statement of Principles

We, the members of the Libertarian Party, challenge the cult of the omnipotent state and defend the rights of the individual.

We hold that all individuals have the right to exercise sole dominion over their own lives, and have the right to live in whatever manner they choose, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal right of others to live in whatever manner they choose.

Governments throughout history have regularly operated on the opposite principle, that the State has the right to dispose of the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labor. Even within the United States, all political parties other than our own grant to government the right to regulate the lives of individuals and seize the fruits of their labor without their consent.

We, on the contrary, deny the right of any government to do these things, and hold that where governments exist, they must not violate the rights of any individual: namely, (1) the right to life -- accordingly we support the prohibition of the initiation of physical force against others; (2) the right to liberty of speech and action -- accordingly we oppose all attempts by government to abridge the freedom of speech and press, as well as government censorship in any form; and (3) the right to property -- accordingly we oppose all government interference with private property, such as confiscation, nationalization, and eminent domain, and support the prohibition of robbery, trespass, fraud, and misrepresentation.

Since governments, when instituted, must not violate individual rights, we oppose all interference by government in the areas of voluntary and contractual relations among individuals. People should not be forced to sacrifice their lives and property for the benefit of others. They should be left free by government to deal with one another as free traders; and the resultant economic system, the only one compatible with the protection of individual rights, is the free market.

I. Individual Rights and Civil Order

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No conflict exists between civil order and individual rights. Both concepts are based on the same fundamental principle: that no individual, group, or government may initiate force against any other individual, group, or government.

II. Trade and the Economy

We believe that each person has the right to offer goods and services to others on the free market. Therefore we oppose all intervention by government into the area of economics. The only proper role of existing governments in the economic realm is to protect property rights, adjudicate disputes, and provide a legal framework in which voluntary trade is protected.

Efforts to forcibly redistribute wealth or forcibly manage trade are intolerable. Government manipulation of the economy creates an entrenched privileged class -- those with access to tax money -- and an exploited class -- those who are net taxpayers.

We believe that all individuals have the right to dispose of the fruits of their labor as they see fit and that government has no right to take such wealth. We oppose government-enforced charity such as welfare programs and subsidies, but we heartily applaud those individuals and private charitable organizations that help the needy and contribute to a wide array of worthwhile causes through voluntary activities.

III. Domestic Ills

Current problems in such areas as energy, pollution, health care delivery, decaying cities, and poverty are not solved, but are primarily caused, by government. The welfare state, supposedly designed to aid the poor, is in reality a growing and parasitic burden on all productive people, and injures, rather than benefits, the poor themselves.

IV. Foreign Affairs

American foreign policy should seek an America at peace with the world and the defense -- against attack from abroad -- of the lives, liberty, and property of the American people on American soil. Provision of such defense must respect the individual rights of people everywhere.

The principle of non-intervention should guide relationships between governments. The United States government should return to the historic libertarian tradition of avoiding entangling alliances, abstaining totally from foreign quarrels and imperialist adventures, and recognizing the right to unrestricted trade, travel, and immigration.

V. Omissions

Our silence about any other particular government law, regulation, ordinance, directive, edict, control, regulatory agency, activity, or machination should not be construed to imply approval."

So far, no significant number of people have walked out of the party over platform disputes. This is probably unsurprising, because in the biennium between national conventions it is rare to see libertarians debating what any particular plank should say. Not unknown! We have people debating the abortion plank with some frequency.

(Continued from page 1) [Major Party Status]

From George Phillis: Because I did not support running a candidate, I was asked: What strategy do you propose? I wrote:

First, the answer is that I support a long-term strategy, rather than the short-term strategy of grabbing major party status without thought for the consequences.

To the purist readers, my answer is that I want the LPMA to be a major party, and collecting a shiny badge issued by the Secretary of the Commonwealth will not turn us into a major party. To become a major party, we actually need to develop into one.

In my opinion, the correct long-term strategy for the Libertarian Party is to do the things that real parties do: Recruit candidates, elect them to office, raise money, expand our voter base, recruit members, do public outreach, litigate, create supportive special-interest groups, until we become a major party. However, the things that we do have to be done in a thoughtful and coherent order, so that they reinforce each other rather than making life more difficult.

Throwing \$7000 give or take into a race behind a candidate who would not even campaign is not appropriate. The same 5000+ valid signatures would put on the ballot three dozen state rep candidates, who would each be able to campaign in their own district.

It would be desirable to give every voter a chance to Vote Libertarian!, and a candidate for governor will most clearly satisfy this desire without risking negative side effects.

Best,
George

From Jim Condit:

As someone who went out to collect the signatures for two city council runs, and an abortive state rep signature collection, I have to say it's somewhat less enjoyable than chewing sand.

Regaining major party status, without a serious candidate with a good chance of winning, is a very, very bad idea. Signature collecting is hard enough without the additional burdens associated with major party status.

And for what, when we had it, how did it help us? It didn't, it only hurt us. George has it exactly right. We need to strive towards limited, achievable goals, not make "statements" that no one cares about.

I suggest that, as a short-medium range goal, we should concentrate on getting a state rep elected, if not this cycle, then a full-out effort for next cycle.

Getting someone into the MA House would give us more legitimacy and momentum than a thousand pointless gestures like regaining major party status.

...Jim Condit

From Bob Underwood:

I thoroughly second George Phillies' opinion as to major party status. In the Ninth Hampden House District (in which I live) the last time I ran for Representative I worked very hard and came up with 130 signatures, about 20 short of enough to get my name on the ballot. Gun groups, drug legalization groups, gay groups, limited taxation groups were totally useless in collecting signatures to get my name on the ballot.

There are about 90 registered libertarians in the Ninth Hampden House District . I could find 5 fairly useful ones, this number includes Shirley (my wife) and myself. I got 4 signatures from Libertarians. Some did not realize that they registered as Libertarian and refused to sign my nomination form. So the bulk of my signatures had to be un-enrolled voters, most of whom are plant life who will not sign a nomination form.

I ran for the City Council last year. City elections are "non-partisan," and the LPMA had lost its major party status. I was able to get the 200 signatures necessary to get my name on the ballot. Most of the signatories were Puerto Rican Democrats. There again Gun groups, drug legalization groups, gay groups, limited taxation groups were totally useless in getting volunteers to collect signatures to get my name on the ballot. Not only that, but the first inclination of the state Committee was to deny me the use of the membership list. I spent no money and got 4000 votes.

Now I am running again for State Representative. I got 195 valid signatures. Most of the signatures came from Puerto Rican Democrats. Once again Gun groups, drug legalization groups, gay groups, limited taxation groups were totally useless in getting signatures on my nomination form. Had I been limited to soliciting signatures from Libertarian and Un-enrolled voters, I might not be on the ballot. LPMA did nothing to help me get on the ballot. I would most likely not run under major party status, it is a lot of work, and it is largely unsuccessful.

Others have told me that they do not want to go through the work of getting signatures. Signature requirements associated with major party status is the major impediment to running candidates for the legislature. And as some one said, "A political party which does not run candidates is a joke." Major Party status will ensure that we will have virtually no candidates running for the legislature. A mass of candidates would generate more publicity, which would help everyone's campaign.

We need to look at practical ways to run candidates. The trickle down method where state side candidates help local candidates simply is not there, or does not work. The campaigns are expensive, they get about 15% of the vote if they do well, and the effort cannot be sustained. The opposite would work, where if we get many local candidates running, they would also generate support for state wide candidates.

Major party status may look good on paper, but it is a disaster in Massachusetts for a minor party to have major party status.

Robert Joseph Underwood 83 Cherrelyn St. Springfield, MA 01104-2441

Peter Sheinfeld wrote: To any of the Libertarians this reaches: I agree with the sense put forth by several people in this discussion. The advantage of major party status for the Libertarians is questionable at best. The only such might be, and this is something about which I'm not fully informed, if our group is able to take real control of the libertarian party name/legally recognized entity in this state. Bear in mind, as important to us as this is, it may be only of internal party value. After reading the recent e-mails on this subject it is unclear to what degree this is possible. My inclination is that George P.'s suggestion may be that most rational way to go.

As Jim Condit stated, running for office takes a huge amount of effort with often little benefit. I am impressed to see that libertarians, who are often not thought of as entirely practical political people, are discussing this matter in a scenario of practicality.

FYI-The Republicans have a candidate for Treasurer to oppose Tim Cahill the incumbent, I believe his name is Ron Davy.
Peter Sheinfeld
ps78rpm@comcast.net

Robert Underwood added:

The membership list is over rated, it is about as useful as the list of registered Libertarians.

It was the donor's money, and they could spend it at the top of the ticket if they wanted to. But, that is not the issue, the issue is "was it the best political strategy." The big measure of a strategy is to look at what happens after its implementation. Other than fund raisers to pay off past campaigns, not much happened.

If the candidates have to develop their own campaigns and contact lists without sharing, why have a party? I want to promote Libertarian ideas, not necessarily build someone's individual ego by providing them with a state and an elected office. Given that motivation, why would I want to help a candidate that refused to share information with other Libertarian candidates?

The concept of "it is my money and I can do what I want with it," and "It is my list," is the basis of the patronage system of the duopoly. People back candidates in the expectation that they will get some kind of preferential treatment from government. They share resources only to help divide the spoils.

Admittedly I have not heard about petition F. But I can just see several groups of "independent" un-enrolled voters getting Republican Candidates listed multiple times on the ballot. It would not help us get our candidates on the ballot. The largest barrier is the signature requirements. I suspect that there may be a feeling that even if one gets on the ballot this time, we could get major party status later and effectively undo the work that has been done.

...Robert Joseph Underwood 83 Cherrelyn St. Springfield, MA 01104-2441