



# The Connecticut Libertarian

The Official Newsletter of the Libertarian Party of Connecticut

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## Chairman's Corner

By Len Rasch

We have just completed an exciting and busy campaign period. Libertarian Party activists maintained several fair and event booths, engaged in four Congressional-level debates, handed out thousands of literature pieces, and were covered in more than a dozen newspapers. While the vote counts were not in the area that we would all like to see, the process of Libertarian Party branding and outreach is well underway.

When we started to plan the 2002 campaign at the beginning of this year, I stressed that we would use the campaigns to begin building an infrastructure for LPers in Connecticut. We have learned a lot about what we need, and we have already started to put it in place.

The most important thing that we learned was to start early. Due to concern over the gubernatorial spot in the Libertarian Party ticket, valuable time passed that could have been focused elsewhere. Lesson: the next election cycle begins the day after the current election.

We are thinking and planning now for 2004. In that year we will need to put a Presidential and Senatorial candidate on the ballot. Hopefully, we can influence ballot access requirements, but either way the process has already started.

We will need to recruit a Senatorial candidate to take advantage of the visibility that we can get at that level of the ticket. We will also be looking to target a couple of state rep potentials, with an expectation of high impact or even a possible win. Prospective candidates should step forward early. Fund-raising will need to begin early; and many more volunteers will be needed.

Please participate in your party. The Libertarian Party is the only party that

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## Libertarian Party of Connecticut Maintains Minor Party Status

Capturing over one percent in each of three statewide offices, the Libertarian Party of Connecticut maintained its "minor party" status. This means that voters may continue to register as Libertarians in any town or city in the state.

While the percentages registered are small, there have been past years in which the registration access was lost. In the aftermath of 9/11, with many people seeking the security of the status quo, there was some concern among party members about the Libertarian Party of Connecticut's minor party status.

In the Fifth District the Gengarely candidacy fell short of the 1% level that would have eliminated petitioning for 2004 in this district. The intensity of the fight between the two incumbents, and the presence of another third party on the ballot were big factors. However, LP branding and outreach efforts were a great success during this campaign.

The Libertarian Party of Connecticut keeps its ballot access for the three statewide offices, and also picked up ballot access for two state rep districts. LP activists and friends gathered at The Keg in Unionville on Election Night, watching the results while sharing ideas, food, and drink.



*Libertarians Share Election Night at the Keg in Farmington*

The elections results were as follows:

|                       |                                  |             |       |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| Walter Gengarely..... | Congressional 5th District ..... | 1,502.....  | 0.72% |
| Darlene Nicholas..... | Secretary of State.....          | 13,919..... | 1.46% |
| Ken Mosher .....      | Treasurer .....                  | 12,449..... | 1.32% |
| Leonard Rasch.....    | Comptroller .....                | 12,662..... | 1.36% |
| Vinnie Marotta.....   | State Rep District 33.....       | 125.....    | 2.16% |
| Arline Dunlop .....   | State Rep District 82.....       | 158.....    | 2.40% |

Unfortunately, there have been some difficulties obtaining vote counts for the approved write-in candidates. Thus, we do not have these results at this time.

# Ballot Access Reform in Connecticut

Now that the elections are over, it's time to turn our focus to the future. Hopefully a future where ballot access for minor parties is more reasonable, giving the voters the true choice they deserve.

To this end, a committee has been formed that is developing and enacting a plan to propose modifying the current statutes definition of "minor party".

To summarize, a major party is one that has received 20% of the vote cast for Governor in the last election or 20% of the registered voters enrolled in a party are enrolled in this party. Once you attain major party status, you have automatic ballot access to EVERY state and local election position in CT. Major parties also hold primaries and have a registrar of voters.

Minor party status is attained on an office by office basis. For example, if a minor party candidate receives 1% of the vote cast for State Senate in the 1st district, that party has ballot access for that office in the next election for that same exact position, but no other.

To gain ballot access for the first time, petitioning must be done, obtaining signatures of 1% of the total vote cast for that office in the previous election.

It's time for these burdensome requirements to be modified.

James Madison found a sponsor for a bill in 2001 to modify this definition. This language has been found and is being reviewed. Once the language changes are determined, a legislative sponsor must be found. Any legislator can sponsor this bill for us during the 2003 legislative session. Odd years are the long session (January - June) where any legislator can sponsor any legislation. Even years are the shorter session (February - May) where there are more restrictions on who can sponsor what type of bills. Preliminary contacts have been made with a few legislators regarding sponsoring this legislation.

Once a sponsor is found, the bill will be written up, given a number and assigned to the appropriate bipartisan committee. In this case, it's the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) committee. To make

this bill a law, it must have a public hearing, a committee vote, a Senate vote, a House vote, and finally be presented to the Governor. Then, the Governor can sign, veto or allow it to sit for 10 days with no action taken. This means it still becomes a law.

At any of these steps, the bill may die. For example, if the committee does not schedule a public hearing, the bill dies. Or if the GAE chair does not call it for a vote after a public hearing, the bill dies. So, we will need to market this idea at every step of the process. Contact will need to be made with our legislators, especially those in the GAE, asking them to push this bill to the next level, asking them to vote YES. Writing letters to the editor to get public support. Contacting the Secretary of the State's office. Contacting the Governor. Your help will be needed in each and every step of the process.

We are also working to get the support of other non-major parties. It would be best for this committee to be nonpartisan, appealing to all not connected with the Republicrats. The more individuals that are interested in the passage of this legislation and will communicate this support to the legislature, the better chance there is that this proposal will become law.

Please check the activists list for requests for help on this important project.

## MEETINGS

### Strategy Session - Saturday, December 14, 2002

The next 2002 Strategy Session meeting will be held at Ken Mosher's house, 8 Bailey Road, Andover, CT from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

For more information please contact the Libertarian Party of Connecticut at 860-585-5857.

Topics for discussion: What we learned from the 2002 campaign; ballot access reform update.

### State Central Committee Meeting - Tuesday, December 17, 2002

The monthly Libertarian Party of Connecticut State Central Committee meeting will be held at the Town Hall in Wethersfield on December 17th at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting is open to members and to the public.

The agenda is:

*Minutes*

*Treasurer's Report*

*Political Director's Report*

*Membership Report*

*Communications Report*

*Chairman's Report*

**Old Business:**

*Ballot Access*

*BCRA Requirements*

*Outreach Reorganization*

**New Business:**

*Communications Quality Pledge*

## Chairman's Corner

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solidly stands for Liberty. Great movements in our country's history (anti-slavery, women's rights, etc) have taken years of struggle to achieve their goals. I believe that changing this country's oppressive direction is only a handful of years away but it will continue to take commitment and effort from all of us and many others who will be joining us.