

Libertarian Party of Oregon

Reformation Plan

Presented at the 2010 LPO Annual Convention

Problem:

After over 30 years of continual attempts to run a political party with the same model of governance that we know has been a failure for both the republicans and democrats, Salem and Washington D.C., we have a deeply fractured organization with severe debts, major factional divides, is seen as hypocritical by most observers, and has failed to elect anyone to partisan office or reform our government. Paid membership is near an all-time low, and in 2008 the LPO fielded only five partisan candidates for Oregon partisan offices.

Solution:

Reform the Libertarian Party of Oregon to function as a libertarian organization with libertarian ideals of governance (least necessary).

What does that mean?

It means that the Libertarian Party of Oregon, instead of being a top-heavy political organization that is designed to try to pull together libertarians to market a singular message and voice in Oregon politics, should be reformed to use the smallest amount of internal governance necessary, and delegate the authority and responsibility for issues and activism to the individual. By removing the official power structure of the party as the target activists must take in order to promote their version of the libertarian message, those energies would need to be redirected to the free marketplace of ideas.

What are the necessary powers of the Libertarian Party of Oregon?

To perform all administrative tasks necessary to maintain ballot status, comply with state law, and call the membership to duly elect candidates to be placed upon the ballot by the Oregon Secretary of State.

Call and hold official meetings for the membership to decide other issues as necessary.

What basic steps are required to implement this plan?

- 1) Elect a slate of proven individuals who can be trusted to implement it
- 2) Adopt a resolution supporting this plan at convention
- 3) Attend the special convention to adopt a revised constitution
- 4) Help grow the movement by volunteering to be a candidate or support one this election year

Proposed Libertarian Party Reform Slate:***Jeff Weston, Chairperson***

Jeff Weston served as the secretary for the Libertarian Party of Oregon from March 2007 until March 2008. During that time he worked to produce an accurate membership list. He is a member of the National Association of Parliamentarians and is currently serving as Vice-President of the Rose City Unit of the National Association of Parliamentarians. For this term in office, Mr. Weston intends to reestablish regular communication with members, ensure organization meetings are run smoothly and

efficiently, and assist the members in reforming the Libertarian Party of Oregon to function as a libertarian organization with libertarian ideals of governance.

Wes Wagner, Vice-Chairperson

Wes Wagner is a known libertarian activist in Oregon, one-time publisher of a Libertarian Newspaper, The Northwest Meridian, and recipient of the 2006 Tonie Nathan Award, awarded to the most effective activist for the Libertarian Party of Oregon. Mr. Wagner also served as chairperson of the LPO during a very difficult period of time in 2007-2008. During that period the financials were turned around, the party ran positive income and cash flow, the books were cleaned up, and membership increased. For this term in office, Mr. Wagner intends to primarily focus on assisting the party in turning around its cash flow problems and working independently on the Govern Yourself 2010 Campaign to field as many libertarian candidates for partisan office as possible. Wes has an MBA from Portland State University and a science and liberal arts undergraduate background, and has been working in information technology for over a decade.

Mark Vetanen, Treasurer

Mark Vetanen joined the Libertarian party in 1996. He served on the LPO Judicial Committee on 1999 to 2000. He was elected Party Treasurer in 2000 to 2003. He served again as Treasurer from 2007 to 2008. Mark currently owns a video production company in Beaverton where he lives with his wife and two children.

Bruce Knight, Secretary

Bruce A. Knight worked as a professional secretary before serving several terms as LPO Secretary (1981-2000). As Chairperson (1998-'99) he worked across factional lines to expand LPO participation, helping raise paid membership to its all-time high in '99. He served as treasurer for three statewide electoral campaigns and three times as unanimous nominee for US House of Representatives, and is the only Oregon libertarian ever to finish second in a federal election (third district, 1998). He published and edited **The Oregon Libertarian** statewide newsletter from 2006-'07.

Bruce believes the LPO's current structure encourages squabbling over control of a central committee with the power to make policy and spend money. An experienced store manager, he now supervises the Green Line Market in downtown Portland.

Two prong approach to reformation:

The party has both internal and external problems. As a result we have divided the approach into a two-prong endeavor, one with an internal focus and the other with an external focus.

Internal:

The internal focus of party reform will be to clean up the constitution and bylaws which will be realigned to restructure into an organization that exists to handle the administrative requirements of running a primary election process and placing partisan libertarian candidates on the ballot.

The principles of these reform proposals that will be subsequently drafted and put forward to the membership for ratification are thus:

- 1) Leave the ultimate authority of the party in the members
- 2) The members should be the registered libertarian voters in Oregon and require no dues
- 3) That the officers and representatives of board of directors should be elected for a 2 year term so they can fulfill the party's 2 year responsibility of running an election
- 4) That the members of the board have to personally pay for any discretionary budget deficits they accrue when their term is up
- 5) That candidates should be nominated by mail ballot for regular elections and convention for special elections to promote the largest possible field of libertarian candidates
- 6) Notice of meetings will meet all legal requirements. Beyond this, members will only receive electronic notice of meetings unless they request postal mail notice and pay for the cost of providing such notice. Electronic notice will be sent to an e-mail list dedicated to such notices and posted on the front page of the party's official web site.
- 7) The board of directors should have no powers to define the libertarian policy, platform, or position on any public/electoral issue. Members and groups wishing to express a position should do so on their own accord.

Additionally there will be a heavy effort to clean up the governing documentation of the party to ensure that all corporate records are in order and that the party is running a positive cash flow and servicing its previously accumulated debts.

External:

The external focus of the plan is how the organization will bring in new leaders, candidates and activists to revitalize the libertarian movement in Oregon. The state party, primarily by staying out of the way, will allow these activists to determine the strategy and tone of libertarian politics in Oregon.

Any individual Libertarian or small group of Libertarians can lead an effective operation: One example is The Govern Yourself 2010 campaign. It is a collective effort to use internet and video media to promote candidates. Because the libertarian party does not have significant assets to support candidates, we have devised a strategy that is compatible with the lifestyles of our candidates.

A detailed look at the Govern Yourself 2010 campaign is included on the next page.

Govern Yourself 2010 Campaign

The Govern Yourself 2010 campaign is a collective effort to use internet and video media to promote candidates. Because the libertarian party does not have significant assets to support candidates, we have devised a strategy that is compatible with the lifestyles of our candidates.

We already have identified 10 candidates who are willing to participate in the Govern Yourself Campaign, but we are of course looking for more. The Govern Yourself 2010 campaign will focus on a series of video publications and an interactive website that will emulate the typical stages of cult deprogramming.

1. Discredit the figure of authority: the cult leader (this case it is the worship of government)
2. Present contradictions (ideology vs. reality)
3. The breaking point: When a subject begins to listen to the deprogrammer; when reality begins to take precedence over ideology.
4. Self-expression: When the subject begins to open up and to voice some of his own gripes against the cult.
5. Identification and transference: when the subject begins to identify with the deprogrammers, starts to think of himself as an opponent of the cult rather than a member of it

1+2 = funny satirical mocking scathing videos

3= educational motivational videos

4-5 = social networking

Most all of us who are looking to be candidates have our own story to tell of how we broke free of the cult of the omnipotent state. The value of this approach is that the minimal participation necessary to be a candidate is low:

- 1) Show up and be nominated
- 2) File paperwork
- 3) Hopefully raise the money to put a candidate statement in promoting your involvement with the campaign (if not someone may be able to help)
- 4) Meet with us to film a 3-5 minute video of who you are and what is your story
- 5) Interact with people who show up on the website if you have the time to invest

What we are doing with the Govern Yourself campaign is breaking the traditional model of politics. We are not showing up to hold out a candidate and try to convince the voting public that they will be a better scoundrel than the one they have, but rather that they should vote for our candidate because what they are really voting for is a statement that they believe in themselves and want to govern their own lives.

If we change the rules of the election, the strategy of how to win a long-term political revolution changes as well.