

# The Connecticut Libertarian

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The Official Newsletter of the Libertarian Party of Connecticut

www.lpct.org

## Libertarian Party of Connecticut Leads the Fight for Open Ballot Access

By James Madison

The LPCT has a bill before the legislature, which if passed will allow the party to run a full slate of candidates in 2002 without having to petition. This would save the party nearly \$12,000 and allow the effort normally expended on ballot access to be focused on the more productive aspects of campaigning.

The bill, HB5810, would change the definition of a minor party so that any political organization that had a candidate for statewide office who received more than 1% of the vote would be able to run candidates for all statewide offices for the next two statewide election cycles.

For example: in 1998, the LPCT ran a full slate of candidates for statewide office. This included Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of the State, Treasurer, Attorney General, and Comptroller. Our candidates for three of these offices received over 1% of the vote. The first statewide election cycle after 1998 was 2000, and the second one after 1998 will be 2002. Therefore, since 1998 is within two statewide election cycles of 2002, and since in 1998 the LPCT had a statewide candidate over 1%, the LPCT would be able to run candidates for all offices in 2002 under the new law without gathering any signatures.

Confused yet? Then just remember the bottom line:

### If the bill passes, the LPCT will do no petitioning in 2002

That means no need to gather signatures. No need to spend money on hired petitioners. No need to coordinate the ballot access effort when we could be coordinating the campaign effort. And once the law is in place, it will mean no petitioning in any future election provided we had a candidate over 1% in either of the previous two elections.

That will save us tremendous amounts of time and money for years to come--but first we have to get the bill passed! That involves three main steps: Get it through the Government Administration and Elections Committee (GAE), get it through the legislature, get it past the Governor. (See summary below. For all 23 steps in the process, go to [www.cga.state.ct.us/three/bill-law.htm](http://www.cga.state.ct.us/three/bill-law.htm)) See **Open**, Page 2

## First Strategy Session of 2001 on Feb. 10th

In keeping with the new meeting agenda, the first strategy session of 2001 will be held on Saturday, Feb. 10 from 9 a.m. to noon. The atmosphere is casual, so come for any part of it and bring bagels or donuts if you'd like. The agenda is open to all things Libertarian or political, but three main topics have been requested:

- Putting the 2002 slate of candidates together, including how to build a good campaign team, what we need in a candidate and how to get our candidates noticed.
- Advertising, including the best advertising media, ways of raising funds, target demographics, and overall effectiveness.
- Political activism, including the kinds of issues to address, organizing rallies, and working with other organizations.

### Directions:

#### *East/West*

- Route 84 to Waterbury
- Exit 20 to Route 8 North
- Route 8 about 1 mile (*Go to N/S below*)

#### *North/South*

- Exit 36 North on Rt. 8,  
"Huntingdon/Colonial Ave."  
- Right at the light at the bottom of exit  
- Go straight through 3 lights up a slight hill  
- At the 4th light, take a right onto Cooke Street  
- Go up a steep hill  
- Take 5th left onto Avalon Circle  
- Go halfway up the circle,  
- Slate blue house with white garage, #100

*See you there!*

### How a bill becomes law



Bill is sent to the appropriate joint standing committee of the General Assembly, depending on the bill's subject matter.



Committee may report the bill favorably, defeat the bill or issue no report (the bill fails).



Committee holds public hearings for the public, state agency representatives and legislators on all bills it wishes to consider.



## Members of the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee:

Chair, Rep. Alex Knopp, 800-842-8267  
Alex.Knopp@po.state.ct.us  
Chair, Sen. Bill Finch, 800-842-1420  
Finch@senatedems.state.ct.us  
Chair, Sen. John W. Fonfara, 800-842-1420  
Fonfara@senatedems.state.ct.us  
Vice Chair, Rep. Minnie Gonzalez, 800-842-8267  
Minnie.Gonzalez@po.state.ct.us  
Ranking Member, Rep. William Hamzy, 800-842-1423  
William.Hamzy@housegop.state.ct.us  
Ranking Member, Sen. Andrew Roraback, 800-842-1421  
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Rep. Mary Ann Carson, 800-842-1423  
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Rep. Christopher L. Caruso, 800-842-8267  
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Rep. Jefferson B. Davis, 800-842-1423  
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Rep. Kevin M. DelGobbo, 800-842-1423  
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Rep. Michael P. Lawlor, 800-842-8267  
Michael.Lawlor@po.state.ct.us  
Rep. Evelyn C. Mantilla, 800-842-8267  
Evelyn.Mantilla@po.state.ct.us  
Rep. David McCluskey, 800-842-8267  
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Rep. Felipe Reinoso, 800-842-8267  
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Rep. Ronald San Angelo, 800-842-1423  
Ronald.SanAngelo@housegop.state.ct.us  
Rep. James Spallone, 800-842-8267  
James.Spallone@po.state.ct.us  
Rep. Jessie G. Stratton, 800-842-8267  
Jessie.Stratton@po.state.ct.us  
Rep. Diana S. Urban, 800-842-1423  
Diana.Urban@housegop.state.ct.us

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### Open Ballot Access

As you can imagine, this is not an easy task since what we are attempting to do is get the R's and D's to support legislation that will make it easier for us to run against them.

That means our only alternative is to build up public pressure. We are doing that aggressively. Activities so far include press releases, an op-ed piece in the Hartford Courant by the LPCT chairman, coordination with the Reform and Green parties, contacting members of the GAE directly, and contacting organizations that support open democracy such as the League of Women Voters.

We are also making a strong point of showing why the bill is good for everyone, not just those in minor parties, including:

1. It will make the Secretary of the State's job easier because minor parties will not have to be tracked on an office-by-office basis as they are now.
2. Makes the law more consistent since major parties are already tracked statewide.
3. Gives voters more choice by letting minor parties present their candidates more easily.
4. Maintains the 1% limit so that the ballot is still difficult enough to keep ballot from being abused.
5. Is consistent with the rest of the country. Almost every other state tracks minor parties statewide.

In addition to all these activities, we now need your help. The current focus is getting the bill past the GAE. To the left is a list of the 20 committee members. Please:

### Call or e-mail the members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee today!

Tell them that you: 1. Support HB5810, the Ballot Access Fairness bill. 2. Want them to hold a public hearing ASAP (Feb. 14 is the last day for hearings). 3. Want them to pass the bill. 4. Feel it's a good idea because it (use some or all of the following): gives voters more choice, simplifies the electoral process, makes the law more consistent, is more fair to minor parties, is more consistent with what other states do.

As always, be courteous and concise. The main thing we are trying to do is get our bill to the top of the list. Committees typically have dozens of bills to be considered, and most die by simply being ignored. The goal right now is to get our bill off the list of bills to be ignored and onto the list of bills to be considered.

Obviously, the road to getting this bill to pass is a tough one, but the reward for getting it to pass makes it worth the effort.

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Debate and amendments in the house of origin. Vote on bill.

A "yes" vote sends the bill to the other house for placement on calendar.

Other house votes on the bill.



If both houses pass the bill, it is sent to the governor. Governor can

1. sign the bill.
2. veto it, or
3. take no action.



The bill becomes law if:

1. the governor signs it;
2. the governor fails to sign within 5 days during the legislative session or 15 days after adjournment;
3. the vetoed bill is repassed in each house by a 2/3 vote of the elected membership.

