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From the Chair

A few words from Chair William Hunt.

The basic purpose of any political party is to run candidates for public office with the intention of getting as many of them elected as possible. “Getting candidates elected,” along with the prerequisite goal of “gaining official party status,” are very simple and straight-forward sentiments that are accompanied by a seemingly bottomless quagmire of rules and regulations designed to protect the established political parties from upstart competition like the Libertarian Party of Rhode Island. Every effort we engage in as a party needs to be in support of this purpose, or we run the risk of becoming a political advocacy group.

Political advocacy groups that support Libertarian principles are certainly needed in our state, but it is not the expressed responsibility of the Libertarian Party of Rhode Island to fill that role, champion specific causes, or endorse or condemn specific legislation. Such efforts are better voiced by endorsed Libertarian candidates and/or advocacy organizations, which the state party can choose to associate with on an ad hoc basis.

You may disagree with this assertion in principle, but the reality of our current status as a political action committee requires us to adhere to certain rules and regulations set by the general laws of Rhode Island and its regulatory body, the Board of Elections. Campaign finance laws, ballot access laws, the board of elections: these are all examples of bureaucratic barriers put in place to entrench the established political parties in power.

There are numerous limitations surrounding the collecting of monetary and in-kind contributions, as well as reporting requirements that require us to track all donor information and expenses per the regular reporting requirements outlined by the state. Running afoul of these regulations and requirements only takes time away from our stated purpose of gaining party status and getting Libertarians elected.

With that said, we are also building a libertarian brand in our state. Without official party status, and without a significant number of local candidates to relate our messaging, how can we attract people to our cause? This is a “chicken or the egg” question that no one person will have the answer to.

We need you, the members of the state party, to take responsibility and get involved. Multiple liberty-minded individuals acting in their own self interest is the most efficient way to advance the cause. If you want to run for office, donate to our candidates, or even help work on a campaign, I encourage you to attend our annual state convention on April 24th and get involved. ***To be an eligible delegate at the RI state convention you need to register 30 days in advance (by March 25th).***

Even if you don’t care for electioneering, if you are passionate about a particular policy issue, I encourage you to start an organization that is separate from our state party. We need more advocacy groups that support libertarian principles, not only to help identify potential candidates and volunteers for the state party, but to become an authority on these niche issues.

Libertarian candidates can benefit from endorsements from these advocacy groups, much like establishment candidates do from the advocacy groups related to their political philosophy.

The state's liberty ecosystem cannot be a top-down, centrally-planned political party. I invite those who are critical of our efforts to step-up and do something to advance their particular cause. We are a voluntary organization operating within the constraints of the state and our state party bylaws. If you want to have any hope in changing either of those, you need to become a member and help shape that effort.

-Billy Hunt
Chairman, LPRI

Policy Report

News of note from the legislative session.

Despite Lifting of Restrictions, Rhode Island's State of Emergency Remains

Dan McKee has now been governor of Rhode Island for more than a year. Following Gina Raimondo's appointment as Secretary of Commerce, Dan McKee assumed office on March 2, 2021. For almost the entirety of McKee's time in office, Rhode Island has been under a state of emergency over COVID-19. McKee last used his executive powers to [extend](#) the state of emergency on March 16. The original declaration of emergency over COVID-19 was issued by Raimondo on March 9, 2020. Rhode Island will be in a state of emergency until at least April 13, when McKee's most recent extension is set to expire.

The state's executive order relating to mandatory mask wearing in the state's public schools [expired](#) on March 4. School districts can now make a decision about whether to make mask wearing optional or mandatory.

Another pandemic-era deregulation, to-go alcohol, is now permanent. The General Assembly passed a bill permanently allowing restaurants to serve take-out drinks. The same bill also extended outdoor dining for another year.

Other News of Note

- Rhode Island may legalize party-bikes. A [bill](#) allowing municipalities to "regulate the use of quadricycle passenger vehicles within their borders" has passed the House of Representatives and is awaiting action in the Senate.
- A [bill](#) that would legalize sale of up to one ounce of marijuana for individuals aged 21 and up and allow up to 10 ounces to be kept in a private residence. Should the bill become law, it will go into effect October 1. In addition to the state's seven percent sales tax, marijuana would be subject to a 10 percent excise tax and a three percent local tax for the municipality in which it is sold.
- Two other bills aimed at drug reform have also been introduced in the legislature. One would [decriminalize](#) psilocybin and buprenorphine and allow medical

practitioners to prescribe their use so long as they are “acting in good faith.” The second bill would [decriminalize](#) possession of up to one ounce of most controlled substances, with the exception of fentanyl.

From the Floor

A space for LPRI members to have their voices heard.

To-go alcohol is the way to go

The COVID-19 pandemic displayed how ridiculous many types of regulation are. In healthcare, licensing requirements were eased because they stood in the way of hospitals quickly hiring new staff to care for the seriously ill. Government officials suspended licensing requirements in the name of public health. Now, government officials are replacing many of those regulations, also in the name of protecting public health. Because we need licensing requirements to ensure qualified people are safely treating those who are sick. Except in an emergency, when they can apparently be suspended.

It’s nice, therefore, to see government decide to do the right thing in at least one instance and leave relaxed rules allowing bars and restaurants to serve to-go alcohol in place. That allowing people to drive from their home to their favorite restaurant to pick up dinners and a margarita during the height of the pandemic didn’t usher in a wave of driving under the influence charges is proof that regulations don’t need to be tightened.

It’s also proof that those regulations didn’t need to exist in the first place. Individuals, for the most part, can operate responsibly without government there to guide them. That to-go alcohol will still be available in the state demonstrates this very effectively. But it shouldn’t have to be demonstrated because the default position of government should not be to babysit adults until they prove themselves capable of being left alone.

-submitted anonymously

Have something to say about recent political events? We want to hear from you!

Send us your opinions, comments, and other miscellaneous musings about libertarian topics: communications@lpri.us. Use “From the Floor” in the subject line.

Join Us for our 2022 Convention

LPRI members: make your voice heard by showing up and voting.

After two years of pandemic restrictions driving our annual convention online, LPRI is back in person for our 2022 convention.

This year's convention will be held on Sunday, April 24 at Italian Corner Deli Market in East Providence. The convention will begin at noon, with a cold buffet lunch of salad and sandwiches available. Water and soft drinks will also be provided, but alcohol is bring your own.

Tickets to attend are \$35 per person. The business portion of the convention, which is free to attend, will follow. We'll be holding elections for party officers and delegates to the Libertarian National Convention.

The following positions are up for election this year:

- Vice-chair
- Treasurer
- Member at-large

In the event there are candidates for state office seeking the party's endorsement, a vote will also be held on candidate endorsements.

Italian Corner Deli Market is located at 10 Boyd Avenue in East Providence. On-site parking is available. An overflow lot is available behind Rumford Pet Center, which is adjacent to the restaurant.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit our website:

<https://lpri.us/events/2022-lpri-convention/>

Anyone who has been an LPRI member for at least 30 days is eligible to vote at the convention. Perks of becoming a member include:

- Only members are eligible to vote at our annual convention. In election years, votes on whether to award the party's endorsement to libertarian candidates for state and local office are held at conventions. Elections for Executive Committee officers occur at conventions, too.
- Only members can hold party offices. Members of the Executive Committee and directors and members of other committees that are part of the party's official structure, such as the Outreach Committee, Communication Committee, and Policy Committee, must be dues-paying members. If you have any interest in party leadership, or serving on a committee within the party, you must first become a member.
- Only members can serve as delegates to the Libertarian National Committee's nominating convention for presidential candidates. The number of delegates LPRI receives at the LNC convention is also determined by the number of members who

live in RI and are enrolled with the LNC, and by those who are registered LPRI members. Growing our membership helps give us a larger voice at the national level.

Yearly membership dues are only \$40. Visit <https://lpri.us/membership-account/membership-levels/> to sign up to become a member.

To vote at this year's convention, you must sign up for membership by March 25.

It's our 45th anniversary as a party, and we're looking for 45 new members to join us in spreading the message of liberty in Rhode Island politics.

If you're already a member, there's still plenty you can do to help the party. 2022 is an election year and we'll need volunteers to help us with campaigning and ballot access.

[Click Here to Volunteer](#)

[Click Here to Donate](#)



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