



Liberty For Massachusetts

A New Dawn for Freedom

Social and Activism Events

December

6 8:00 PM Lowell Area Liberty Association, November/December Meeting *note unusual date for this group* Outback Steakhouse, Reiss Avenue off Lowell Connector, Lowell Arthur Torrey, arthur_torrey@comcast.net 978-663-0241

14 6:30 PM PVLA Monthly Meeting, Hu Ke Lau Restaurant at Mass Pike Exit 5 Contact: Carol McMahon, 413-250-6608 cjmcmahon@verizon.net

18 6:00 PM WCLA Monthly Meeting, Tweed's Restaurant, Worcester MA 01605 Contact: George Phillis, phillies@4liberty.net 508-754-1859

To Be Announced—

The State Organizing Committee may have a pre-holiday event. Rob Power is organizing a new Cambridge libertarian group, Drinking Freely, modeled after the highly successful Democratic Party group Drinking Liberally. Contact: drinkingfreely.org

Get On The Ballot

A Guide for Libertarian Activists

How do you get on the ballot in Massachusetts, for partisan office? I'll limit the discussion here to state-wide offices, the State Legislature, and the Governor's Council. First, Massachusetts has several types of political party. Libertarian is a "Party Designation" not a major party. Massachusetts uses a specific language to describe party membership. If you check a Party Name on the Motor Voter form you have "enrolled" in that Party. If you check no box, you are "Unenrolled", a status the rest of the country calls "Independent".

In Massachusetts, the only path of any importance to get on the ballot are via petition (the official phrase is

[Get on the Ballot!] (Continued on page 2)

Libertarians Do Better in Local Elections

Massachusetts libertarians did well in elections across the Commonwealth. In Cambridge, Bill Hees set a new record, finishing 13th in a race for 9 seats. He also received more first place votes for City Council than any Libertarian before him. Hees finished ahead of Libertarian Jim Condit. Hees also beat the only Republican candidate—the Republican Party machine was not able to field as many candidates as our Libertarians did. In Springfield, running in an 18 candidate race for 9 City Council seats, Bob Underwood received 3943 votes. 9201 votes would have sufficed for his election. In Holyoke in a 14 candidate race for 8 seats, Bruce Gibson received 1883 votes. 3977 votes would have sufficed for his election. Underwood and Gibson, running in heavily contested races, each got over 40% of the vote needed to win.

Liberty for Massachusetts Membership/Fundraising Campaign

Liberty for Massachusetts and the libertarian Liberty Tree Small Government Low Taxes Political Action Committee are preparing a collaborative membership and fundraising drive. The current working draft of the fundraising letter is enclosed for your consideration. Your remarks sent to outreach@LibertyForMassachusetts.org will be taken into account in designing the final form. It will be distributed to the extent that people make contributions to pay for its distribution. Over the past year, Liberty for Massachusetts has been the predominant libertarian presence at political outreach events across Massachusetts such as the Boston Pride Festival and the Boston Freedom Rally. In recent years, the Liberty Tree

[Membership and Fundraising Drive] (Continued on page 2)

Liberty for Massachusetts

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(Continued from page 1) [LFM/Liberty Tree Proposed Fund/Member Drive] PAC has been the major net source of support for libertarian candidates for nonfederal office.

With forthcoming elections to the State Legislature and other offices, now is the time for Liberty for Massachusetts to move to a greater level of political presence and activity, helping local activists to organize and educating the public about libertarian solutions to their problems. Libertarian candidates need financial as well as activist volunteer support. Under State Law, Liberty for Massachusetts cannot give money directly to candidates.

LfM could launch a PAC, as other groups have done. However, there already is a long-standing libertarian PAC in the state, the Liberty Tree Small Government Low Taxes Political Action Committee. Launching a second PAC appears a pointless duplication of effort. While someday LfM may launch its own PAC, this appears premature as an activity. A cooperative campaign is being prepared.

The message is: Join! Volunteer! If you want to support activism, give to Liberty For Massachusetts. If you want your money to go directly to candidates, to the Liberty Tree PAC. To comply with state law, the Liberty Tree PAC must pay for the mailing. To support a more extensive fundraising campaign, give to Liberty Tree.

(Continued from page 1) [How to Get On the Ballot] "nominating paper") signed by registered voters Nominating papers put Democrats and Republicans into the September Primary Election. Nominating papers put Libertarians and Independents onto the November General Election ballot.

The required number of valid petition signatures for the various offices include State Representative(150), State Senator(300), Governor's Council(1000), and U.S. Congress(2,000). Each signature is checked by town or city officials, and must be valid. To be valid, a signature must be by a registered voter who lives in the district. Any voter can sign a petition for a Party Designation or independent candidate. There are rules permitting you to protect a disqualification. If you needed 150 signatures, and ended with 149 valid signatures, it is probably worthwhile to check your rejected signatures very carefully against the up to date list of registered voters, and see if a town clerk made an oversight or could not read a signature you can identify.

The numbers above represent minimum numbers of valid signatures. If you only collect the quoted num-

ber of signatures some or many of them will be invalid and you will not get onto the ballot. A traditional safety estimate is that you want an extra 20% of valid signatures above the minimum. If you are running for State Rep, you want 180 or 200 valid signatures, not 150.

Now we come to practice. The numbers I just quoted are *valid* signatures. If you collect signatures door to door, you know whose signature you have collected, and can check if it is valid. If you stand in front of the supermarket, you will face complications: First, off the top, 10% (small towns) to 30% (large cities) of the signers are not to be registered voters. Second, some towns are split between several districts. Most people do not know their District. If your town has four districts, 3/4 of your signatures will come from people from the wrong District.

So, how many real signatures do you need to get on the ballot? I have run under a Party Designation and as a candidate of a Major Party. I have carefully tracked my signature validity rates. As a party designation candidate, 80% or so of my signatures were valid. As a Libertarian Major Party candidate in 1996, validity rates ranged from 1/3 down to 12% (in Boston. If your petitioners work hard to question voters about which Party they are in, you can get the validity percentages higher. However, filtering your signatures only makes it more difficult to get on the ballot. your prefiltering effort will eliminate signatures.

As a simple rule, so long as 'Libertarian' is not a major party, you need to collect 50% more signatures than you need valid signatures. If you have a town split between districts, multiply the required count by the number of districts. In Boston, matters are far worse. The Krick Campaign going door to door went to literally thousands of locations to collect enough valid signatures. If you go door to door, you can validate names against a voter list, and that count, at least in smaller towns, should be 90% or more correct. In urban districts, you can go door to door by walking. Saturday and Sunday appear to be good days. In rural districts, the candidate or petitioner really really can use a driver, because two people working together get far more work done than a single worker can.

I have said nothing about collecting signatures for a run for statewide office, which would require 10,000 valid signatures. If you have really large amounts of your own money (say, seven or eight digits) to spend on a campaign, you are certainly welcome to do this. However, it appears impossible to do this with volunteers from anything like the current state libertarian organizations, so we are not proposing it as a possible path to running people for office.

...George Phillies