

Libertarian Party of Massachusetts  
State Committee  
Meeting on Thursday, May 29, 2008

The meeting came to order at 7:30 PM. Present were committee members David Blau, Carol McMahon, George Phillies, Art Torrey, Bob Underwood, Mary-Ann Wolf, and Walter Ziobro.

The agenda was approved with additions as seen below.

1. Officer reports

Walter Ziobro tendered his resignation from the state committee, conditioned on our finding a replacement for him as treasurer.

Treasurer: the Federal accounts have \$7,368.00. The state account has \$128.00. Of the amounts deposited, at least 2142 Federal dollars and 100 state dollars were for ballot access. Since January 1 the Federal account has received \$2,683.00 and has expended \$2,347.00, for a net gain and of \$337.00.

Political facilitator: Member Steve Greffenius is running for school board. He would like to have help, perhaps including petitioning, door to door contact, signs, state filing, and so forth. Carol McMahon will coordinate this.

We have a booth at the Boston Pride Festival. George Phillies' campaign paid for it. We are sharing the booth with Outright Libertarians. The notion of using the booth for ballot petitioning appears to be inoperative. The event is Saturday, June 14, from noon to six on City Hall Plaza in Boston. Volunteers include Carol and friend, George, Art, Dave, and others. We will have literature stressing the positive support of the libertarian movement on GLBTQPL issues, general literature such as ISIL brochures, and literature plugging our party. Phillies has a new Xerox Phaser that does color printing really cheaply for brochures.

Operations facilitator: So soon as a list of expired and expiring members is sent, he will start sending out renewal notices. We need to renew the mail arrangements with Steve Drobnis. We appropriated \$100.00 for renewal, and \$150.00 for mail forwarding. It was agreed that mail forwarding costs, especially if we are mailing to a new mailing list with many bad addresses, are extremely high. We will gradually migrate our mailing address to a new post office box in Worcester, which is up about as centrally located as you can get for most people. Phillies was tasked with procuring a mailbox in the Worcester main post office, which will be accessible at all times.

Webmistress: Updated bylaws have been posted. The volunteer form from national was uncooperative so a new form based on a documented perl script has been installed and is up and running. State committee members are asked to look carefully at the volunteer form. Volunteer data will be sent to Carol and George. There are now 43 forum members. The message from the state chair on the national convention was sent to both to the forum and placed on the homepage. A positive message in support of a special state convention was received.

Membership Secretary: Phillies reported that we have 85 continuing members, 8 renewals, and about a dozen life members. He is still working on the life member question. In the next few months, only three memberships will renew.

Newsletter: The newsletter has been delayed by computer failures. It will be out soon. Dave Blau is asking for letters about the National Convention and what happened there.

Summary report on the national convention: Phillies reported on region formation. The presidential and vice presidential candidates are Bob Barr, who is a Washington lobbyist and political fundraiser, and Wayne Allyn Root, who is a Las Vegas businessman. Several Committee members made statements for the record. Recommendations of Treasurer Ziobro relating to the national convention were discussed and acted upon.

Details on the national convention and its implications:

Region formation: Phillies reported on Region formation. Under LNC By-Laws, states may freely and voluntarily group themselves into regions. If your region has 10% or more of the national membership, it is entitled to one regional representative for every 10% of the membership it has. In mid April, Phillies contacted the other state chairs in the New England, New York, New Jersey and region, proposing arrangements. After a month, there had been no responses. Noting that OR, WA, and ID had severed from the CA region, and that local State Chairs were not interested in talking about region formation, the State Committee advised Phillies that we were interested in a region including New England if it also included the western states. We now advance to the National Convention.

New England, NJ, NY and WV tentatively formed a region. We were invited to join, but we had a small delegation on-scene, it appeared the deal had already been made, and the new region had sufficient people that we had no leverage: They had 10% of the membership. Several plausible Regional Representatives were felt by State Comm members on-scene familiar with the background to be inauspicious choices. (Phillies: Actually, one delegate threatened to strangle me if we joined a region that had a specified person as regional representative. On reflection, I realized that I would choose to help.) State Committee members on-scene agreed to decline the invitation. Phillies was instructed by State Committee members on-scene that we could join a region, but the region (i) could not be simply the old NE, NJ, NY states, and (ii) could not include Texas.

Negotiations with OR and WA were somewhat complex. At one point OR was incorrectly led to believe, or so we were told, that we had joined the New England Region, so we drifted out of contact. The southeast states had a double region with two elected Regional Reps, Flood and Barr, but prior to the deadline Florida withdrew, leaving the double region with one allowed regional rep. Florida joined with OR, WA, ID, and HI to form a new region 7.

We were then told (i) WV joined a different region so NE, NY NJ needed us, and then separately (ii) New England and points south formed a double region, so we were not needed, but were invited to join. McMahon and Phillies stepped out to find the other state committee members on scene to seek a decision. As soon as we left, the region people were incorrectly told that we had rejected

their proposal; they promptly elected a regional representative. At this point Phillies emphatically declined further invitations to join that region.

For the next two years, we are not a part of any region. Phillies was then asked if he wanted to be elected Regional Alternate for the new Region 7, in which he does not live; he said he was available but that takers in that region should be preferred, and one was chosen.

We are therefore a free independent state, not subservient to any region. While we do not have our own regional representative on the LNC, history does not suggest that this is a loss.

Discussion advanced to the National Convention's choice of Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates.

Walter Ziobro suggested a checklist of tasks for the state committee related to this question. We largely followed his list. Have we lost any electors? Elector candidates who were present were asked if they were withdrawing. None withdrew. We will confirm with other electors that they are not withdrawing. Assignments were made as to who will contact each of the remaining electors.

Torrey reported that he had posted on several blogs that if our Party carries Massachusetts, not a likely event, that he will not vote for Bob Barr for President. Reasons included Barr's authorship of DOMA, his support for the War on Iraq, his support for the War on Drugs, his position on the Genarlow Wilson affair, and campaigning for school prayer while on the LNC. Ziobro noted that electors are required to pledge to support party candidate listed on the nominating papers. However, if the candidate is replaced, there is no legal enforceability against the electors

Wolf asked what our options are at this stage. Wolf and Phillies discussed substitution. Phillies is waiting for paperwork that the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office has promised on how to make substitution.

Phillies reported that he had had forwarded to him by LNC member Dan Karlan a threat by another LNC member to sue the LPMass State Committee if we do not place Barr on the ballot. Phillies noted that we have yet to find out who makes the substitution, and because this committee has no legal status in Massachusetts election law it is likely the electors, not us, who make the substitution. There have also been threats to disaffiliate Massachusetts from Libertarian National Committee, Inc. if we do not make the substitution.

One possible outcome is that there would be several Presidential candidates on the ballot, each identified as "Libertarian", if several candidates collect enough signatures. There is a trademark on "Libertarian Party", but that phrase would not be used on ballots.

Wolf read five options she had placed on the forum. The options she noted were:

1) Gather enough signatures to put some presidential candidate onto the ballot, and then hold a special state convention to decide which candidate to substitute. We may not have the money for this.

2) There are several people gathering signatures. If they do not gather signatures, then perhaps nobody gets onto the ballot. This would be Wolf's preference. We then expend our time, and any

money that is left, trying to get the income tax repealed.

3) Barr has backed off to some extent on most of the positions people object to. If we decide that we believe him, we could try to convince him to back off on the Pagan position as well, and make our decision after giving him a chance to do this.

4) Ziobro proposes we should bite our tongues and support Barr even if he is not the candidate we would have preferred. Ziobro proposes a convention to pass resolutions, but not to change who we put onto the ballot.

5) Re-affiliate our state party with an organization other than LP National. It would be helpful to see whether other state parties are considering the same option. Wolf has not heard anyone advocate this option.

Questions dealing with fundraising for ballot access were discussed. Motion (Torrey): to discuss whether we should ask our donors if they want their money back. Some donors may want their money back, because they thought they were donating to help put a true libertarian on the ballot. We did not then know who the nominee would be. Perhaps donors should be asked to redirect their funds for partybuilding. Are we morally obligated to offer refunds?

Ziobro asked if we should be active or passive with refunds. Should we wait for someone to ask, or should we ask them if they want money returned? Blau suggested that the question was premature, because we have not yet noted who will be on the ballot. It was proposed that we have a reasonable contract with National to try to go ahead with ballot access. If we actively reduce our resources, we are not honoring our commitment. Ziobro proposed returning money out of general funds, leaving the ballot access money in place. Returning money to donors would cost us potentially \$2000 or so. Committee agreed to return to this issue.

There was agreement that we will need to notify National promptly about our money situation.

Discussion on a special convention.

Torrey outlined reasons why Barr should not be placed on the ballot.

1. Donations to MULTIPLE Republicans with Libertarian opponents, while sitting as LNC member (note that donation recipients backed causes that Barr claims to oppose - they were among the worst of the R's from an LP standpoint)
2. Interviews and articles dating SINCE joining the LP indicating ongoing support for the War on Some Drugs, and foreign interventions
3. DOMA, Don't Ask-Don't Tell and the whole GBLT issue (I don't buy the states rights BS at all)
4. The Attack on the Pagans - never apologized for, and no assurance he won't continue it as CIC
5. Possible racism indicated by CCC address, excuse only marginally acceptable
6. Questionable personal ethics in terms of marital behavior, alleged encouragement and payment for 2nd wife's abortion while preaching anti-choice stance, etc
7. Protectionist record as identified by CATO
8. The Genarlow Wilson affair, and his insistence on wanting to keep the kid in jail, where IMHO he shouldn't have been in the 1st place
9. Concerns about how good his 2nd Amendment stance really is  
(Note that the Wiccan issue is only a SMALL part of my objections, if that were the only issue I could possibly live with it...) Wolf reported confirming some of these reasons.

Wolf: expressed concern that if we did not place Barr on the ballot we would be going out on a limb. There were reports that New Hampshire is also having a special state convention. Perhaps we should consider the option of having a two-state convention. We'd be in a stronger position if we acted with other states. Wolf offered to contact LPNH State Committee members.

Phillies made a statement for the record about the unsatisfactory consequences of the National Convention. He blamed himself for the negative results of our decision to pursue a Presidential campaign rather than recruitment for other offices. The statement follows the minutes. Phillies noted that there was no option leading to Barr not being on the ballot, no matter what state party members told us the State Committee to do, because National could always find a fresh slate of electors and petition. The only question is whether the money spent thus far would go to waste.

It was proposed that we have a special state convention to pass resolutions advising the national ticket, or to pass resolutions of censure against Barr supporters. Under our Bylaws, the question of placing Barr on the ballot could be irrevocably excluded from the state convention agenda. A proposed agenda might include: Resolutions of advice or censure. Non-binding recommendations to state libertarians. Instruction to state committee to re-consider affiliating with LNC., Inc.

A Special State Convention is reasonably expected to break even, if held in a commercial location. There was general discussion about the threat from the LNC member to sue us. There was discussion about Barr's personal record.

Phillies polled committee members about holding a special state convention. There were more people undecided than in favor or opposed. Phillies could contact other people having reservations. A special state convention here could trigger other state parties to take action. After some further discussion, Phillies proposed to hold a Summer Social at his home on June 15 at 2PM, open to all state party members, to discuss what LPMass should do.

The issue of people who want to subscribe and cannot give us money was discussed. It was proposed that entities who cannot legally give LPMass money should be given free electronic subscriptions to our newsletter.

Mindful of the above discussion, the State Committee agreed that it will not ask ballot access donors if they want their money back, but that it will return donations if donors ask.

There was discussion of where we put our money. There appeared to be agreement that we should henceforth focus on putting money into our OCPF account, not into our Federal account.

Phillies Statement to the State Committee

Last week I spent eight days in scenic Denver at our libertarian party national convention. As our state chair, as a voting delegate, I spoke up vigorously for our libertarian message of peace, liberty, and prosperity. I am deeply troubled to report on the outcome of that convention.

I shall preface the remark with the observation that I am a presidential elector for our state party, and having promised to perform those obligations, I intend to perform them by voting for our

national candidate if I am in fact placed on the ballot and if we happen to carry Massachusetts.

Let us recall where our state party is. We have very limited resources of people and money. Last year, we couldn't use those resources both to recruit and support candidates for our state legislature and to support a Federal campaign. We don't have enough money or people. We chose to commit those resources to place on the ballot our presidential candidate. After all, our libertarian party had had excellent opportunity to exploit the current political situation.

The situation has not developed as favorably as might have been hoped. The keynote speaker of the convention, and I personally protested, was Richard Viguerie. In 1976, Viguerie competed with Lester Maddox for the nomination of the American Independent Party started by George Wallace. Viguerie's direct mail campaigns are well known to have supported such right-wing racists as Jesse Helms, Sun Young Moon, Oliver North and George Wallace. Viguerie advised Jerry Falwell on the formation of the Moral Majority. His presence as keynote speaker can only be viewed as a conscious decision by our national chair William Redpath to identify our party with right wing conservative bigotry. In Massachusetts, the first state to eliminate slavery, the espousal of white racism by our national party is not a positive selling point.

Earlier this election cycle, our party national committee used party resources to assist in the presidential campaign of the candidate of the party of conservative racism. Those resources were given to our national committee to advance the campaigns of libertarian candidates, not to advance the campaigns of republican candidates. The decision of our Libertarian National Committee to use those resources that to support the Republican was a gross breach of the fiduciary responsibilities of our national committee. Unfortunately, many of these people were reelected to office.

I regret to note that our presidential candidate, Bob Barr, not ten years ago attempted organize an army pogrom against the Wicca faith. To its credit, the army refused to cooperate. Having a presidential candidate who attempted to drive members of any faith out of the army will not be a positive selling point for our other candidates. Many of Barr's other stands are equally problematic, and most Massachusetts residents have adequate political sophistication not to believe the election-day conversion of a political candidate from one stand to another.

The net result of all this, in my opinion, is that our national party has thrown away its political opportunity to expand our party. Our decision, however reasonable, to emphasize supporting a presidential campaign has proved a disaster for our party for which I must personally take responsibility. We now have neither a presidential candidate who is viable in Massachusetts nor the possibility of exploiting the ongoing collapse of the Massachusetts Republican party of bigots.

I am not unaware that I have previously accepted the nomination of the New Hampshire Libertarian Party to be its presidential candidate, a matter that was well known in advance, and so in other places I will be obliged to keep my other promises. I note that in the highly controversial and well-researched national convention that we just finished, none of my opponents viewed my prior commitment to our New Hampshire sister party to be worthy of comment or criticism, and therefore I do not feel that keeping both sets of promises at the same time is contradictory.

Having said that, I did participate in our Libertarian National Convention, and I remain personally

obliged, until such time as my state committee or state party invokes my prior commitment to them and instructs me otherwise, to be supportive in Massachusetts of our presidential candidate.

The underlying difficulty, which we will need to resolve, is that our national party is in the grip of southern white bigots who gave us a candidate who addressed the Council Of Conservative Citizens, and who gave LNC resources to a Republican presidential candidate whose current position is that "don't ask don't tell" is all right with him. It remains my duty, a duty as heavy as a mountain, to support our presidential candidate. However, I do not believe it can be said to be in the best interests of the libertarians of Massachusetts to avoid some correction in circumstances relating to a national party whose national chair de facto just endorsed white racism by having a former George Wallace fundraiser, a man who ran against Lester Maddox for national office nomination, as a keynote speaker.