

REGION 5 REPORT

Submitted to: Libertarian National Committee, Aug. 14, 2017

Submitted by: James W. Lark, III
Region 5 Representative, Libertarian National Committee

This report will provide information concerning activities of the Libertarian Party state affiliates in Region 5 that have occurred since the Alexandria meeting. I shall provide an updated report at the meeting in Kansas City should additional information become available.

I had the pleasure of participating in the state conventions of the Maryland Libertarian Party on Apr. 29, the Libertarian Party of North Carolina on Aug. 13, and the Libertarian Party of West Virginia on June 24. Allow me to offer my thanks to these parties and their members for the tremendous hospitality I received during my participation.

I am pleased to report that I have been able to represent the LP in various ways since the previous LNC meeting. For example, I continue to serve at least once a month as a guest on a two-hour political talk show that airs on weekdays on WINA radio (1070 AM/98.9 FM in Charlottesville, Virginia). In addition, I am pleased to report that on June 17, I received the Leonard E. Read Distinguished Alumni Award for Leadership from the Foundation for Economic Education. (The award was presented during a ceremony at the 2017 Foundation for Economic Education Conference (“FEEcon 2017”) in Atlanta, Georgia.)

Delaware

Sean Goward (sean.goward@yahoo.com) is the chair of the Libertarian Party of Delaware during the LPD convention in Dover on Mar. 25. I did not receive a report from him.

District of Columbia

John LaBeaume (jvlab@electiondissection.com) is the chair of the Libertarian Party of the District of Columbia. He indicated that he is working as campaign manager for the Cliff Hyra for Governor campaign in Virginia. He said that the LPDC is researching recruitable candidates to maintain ballot status.

Maryland

Bob Johnston (bob.johnston@live.com), chair of the Libertarian Party of Maryland, provided the following report:

The Maryland Libertarian Party has 20,446 registered voters as of July, 2017. This constitutes over 0.5% of the total amount of registered voters in the state.

The Maryland LP has 120 members as of the end of July, 2017.

The annual picnic, which had been scheduled for July 29, had to be rescheduled for August 26, due to poor weather.

The state party convention took place on April 29 at the restaurant Red, Hot, and Blue in Laurel, MD. Neil Franklin of LEAP (Law Enforcement Against Prohibition) was the banquet speaker.

The MDLP nominated five candidates for the 2018 elections at the state convention:

Governor:	Shawn Quinn
Lt. Governor:	Christine Smith
State Senate 30:	Christopher Wallace
State Delegate 35-B:	Thomas Parks
State Delegate 42-B:	J. D. Sandy

I expect more candidates to be nominated at the picnic on August 26.

North Carolina

Brian Irving (brian@libertypoint.org), chair of the Libertarian Party of North Carolina, provided the following report:

I was hoping to tell you that the NC General Assembly passed a significant ballot access reform bill. But it appears that the bill, which would lower the barrier for a "new" party to get on the ballot to about 12,000 signatures, won't be considered anytime soon. The legislature is going to be tied up with the gerrymandering.... err redistricting process.

The only news to report is that our State Convention is Aug. 11-13 in Lake Lure, NC. Our focus will be on preparing for the 2018 election, which will be a once-in-a-blue-moon election in NC (no top ticket races, i.e. governor, US Senate). We will also elect new officers and an executive committee.

Pennsylvania

Drew Bingaman (chair@susquehannavalleylp.org), chair of the Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania, provided the following report:

Beginning with my election as Chair, I strove to create an atmosphere of shared goals, especially among the rest of the Executive Committee. With changes to our Constitution/Bylaws at this year's convention we have broken the Commonwealth into three zones, each headed by a Vice Chair. So far the goal of lessening the burden on each of the Vice Chairs giving each less territory to cover seems to have paid dividends.

Our western PA contingent which in the past few years of my involvement has seen less and less representation and less and less activity, is now very much resurgent and we have reconnected with or reconstituted several county parties, with several more to come very soon. I must hand most of the success of this initiative to our new Western Vice Chair Jessica Santiago. Jessica has been wonderful in helping the west to reorganize and reconnect to the state party. Our Central Vice Chair, Bill Sloane suffered from some fairly severe medical issues shortly after getting started, thankfully through sound communication, The Secretary, Steven Brenize and myself were able to fill in for Bill while he recovered. We are all glad Bill has now recovered and is back with the LPPA and willing to continue the fight for liberty in the Commonwealth.

The Eastern contingent has been relatively quiet on the VC front, however since the primary goal of the VC's is to foster and to help build new county affiliate parties, this is of little surprise. The eastern section of PA is the most populated with affiliate parties out of all three zones.

2017 is mostly a municipal election year for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, however there are several statewide judicial positions up for grabs this year. Unfortunately despite our best recruiting efforts, we were only successful in finding one candidate to run for any of these positions: Drew Gray Miller for Judge of Commonwealth Court.

Because this year is a municipal election year, local candidates must turn paperwork in to their local board of elections, and the statewide candidates will file with the DoS in Harrisburg. This creates the problem on not being able to stack signatures on one petition. Necessitating having 2 separate petitions (one state, and one local) for those gathering signatures.

Ultimately we were unsuccessful in the statewide drive. However we have several opportunities in major local elections (Scranton Mayoral race) and several "special" elections which will be held concurrent with the general election where we only need nominate candidates, no signature drive is necessary.

I got word that Gary St Fleur the LPPA candidate for Mayor of Scranton is having his ballot status challenged. The challengers are claiming 78 out of his 214 signatures are either invalid or illegible. As this news just came in, we are preparing a response and building a team to help Gary out. His hearing will take place Tuesday August 15 at 9:00am EST at the Lackawanna County Courthouse.

With the end of challenge period now upon us we will be gathering a comprehensive list of candidates who are on the ballot and will be sending that to national. We do have many races that are exciting. Delaware county has done an impressive job this year with their own county wide candidates and we are very excited to see them do well in November.

Drew Bingaman
Chair, Libertarian Party of Pennsylvania

Virginia

Bo Brown (boebrown@yahoo.com) is the chair of the Libertarian Party of Virginia. I have not received a report from Mr. Brown.

West Virginia

Luke Brumfield (luke.brumfield@lpwv.org), the chair of the Libertarian Party of West Virginia, provided the following report:

The LPWV registration almost doubled since the beginning of the last election season, and we are still getting registrants every month. We are currently at 5,238 and the legacy parties have been either losing or maintaining with independents growing as well. We are well on our way to having a large slate of candidates for the house of delegates. The way people have been popping up, not just to get in touch but with interest to run, has been very encouraging.

Our governor, Jim Justice switched from being a Democrat to a Republican, but he was always a "Red" in my opinion. One US Senator and only one State level executive are D's. Since the Dems have controlled the state for generations and top level ones are switching parties, I see any semblance of principle (not even to mention the sort of "conservative" ideas we can appreciate) going out the window. The next few months and next election will be tumultuous to say the least. Every time someone says "I'm done with X party!" our checkbox is right there on the registration form.

WV likes Trump and I understand why after thinking about his visit and speech. Obama talked about people clinging to guns and religion in a disparaging fashion, and coal took a big hit under him (regardless of it was his fault directly). WV has had the 2nd highest percentage of growth in the country, and coal exports are up. I guess what I am getting at is I need to figure out how I am going to work with the reality that Trump is popular in West Virginia. I say we should be ready with "See, I told you so!" when things get better after a round of deregulation and some tax cuts, much like when cannabis started becoming legalized.