



# T LIBERTARIAN

Libertarian National Committee  
**2017 ANNUAL REPORT**



## Libertarian National Committee (LNC)

as of December 31, 2017

Chair.....	Nicholas Sarwark
Vice Chair.....	Arvin Vohra
Treasurer.....	Tim Hagan
Secretary.....	Alicia Mattson
At Large.....	William Redpath
At Large.....	Sam Goldstein
At Large.....	Daniel Hayes
At Large.....	Starchild
At Large.....	Joshua Katz
Region 1 Representative.....	Caryn Ann Harlos
Region 1 Alternate.....	Steven Nielson
Region 2 Representative.....	Ed Marsh
Region 2 Alternate.....	Steven Nekhaila
Region 3 Representative.....	Elizabeth Van Horn
Region 3 Alternate.....	Dustin Nanna
Region 4 Representative.....	Jeffrey Hewitt
Region 4 Alternate.....	Aaron Starr
Region 5 Representative.....	Jim Lark
Region 5 Alternate.....	Trent Somes
Region 6 Representative.....	David Pratt Demarest
Region 6 Alternate.....	Sean O'Toole
Region 7 Representative.....	Whitney Bilyeu
Region 7 Alternate.....	Erin Adams
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Region 8 Alternate.....	Larry Sharpe

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## A Legacy of Liberty

In 2017, the national Libertarian Party received a generous bequest of \$111,863 from Dr. Frank Clinard, Jr. from Los Alamos, NM

Dr. Clinard spent 25 years at Los Alamos National Laboratory, and his work as a research scientist and materials expert was respected worldwide. After retiring from Los Alamos, he taught materials engineering at New Mexico Tech. He was considered the world's authority on radiation damage on materials.

Dr. Clinard was an active Libertarian since the 1970s. In 1992, he ran for the New Mexico state senate as a Libertarian, and later served as public relations director for LP New Mexico.



*We are grateful for Dr. Clinard's generosity to the Libertarian Party both throughout his lifetime and now through this bequest. We'll proudly add his name to the 'Legacy Libertarians' plaque, which will soon be on display at our headquarters.*

— LNC Chair Nicholas Sarwark



## 2017: A Year of Strategic Investment & Growth

In 2016, our presidential candidate earned an unprecedented vote total, three times our previous record. Coming out of that election cycle, we resolved to use that momentum, invest strategically, and push forward aggressively, to prepare for 2018 and beyond.

That strategic investment included growing our small team of staff and consultants. As the party grows, so does the workload! We hired a press secretary, a technology developer, two candidate support specialists, and a development manager.

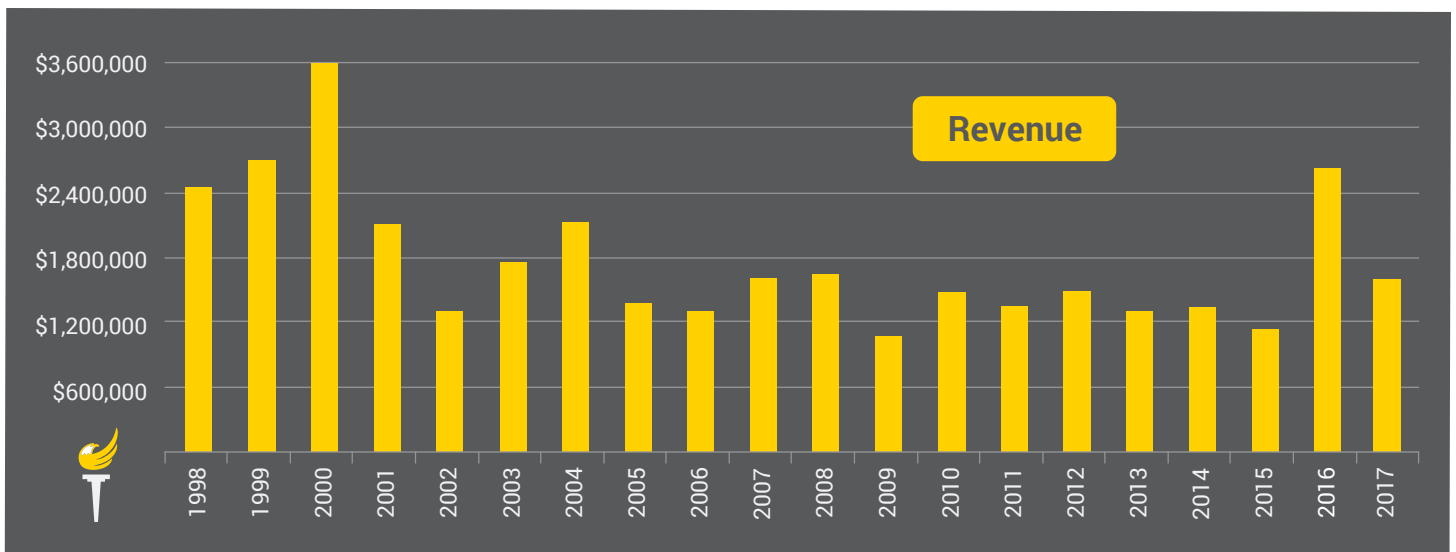
**Thanks to our many generous donors and members, in 2017 our revenues were strong.**

Excluding revenues related to the national convention and bequests:

2017 **revenues exceeded** the average of the previous 10 years' revenue by 5 percent.

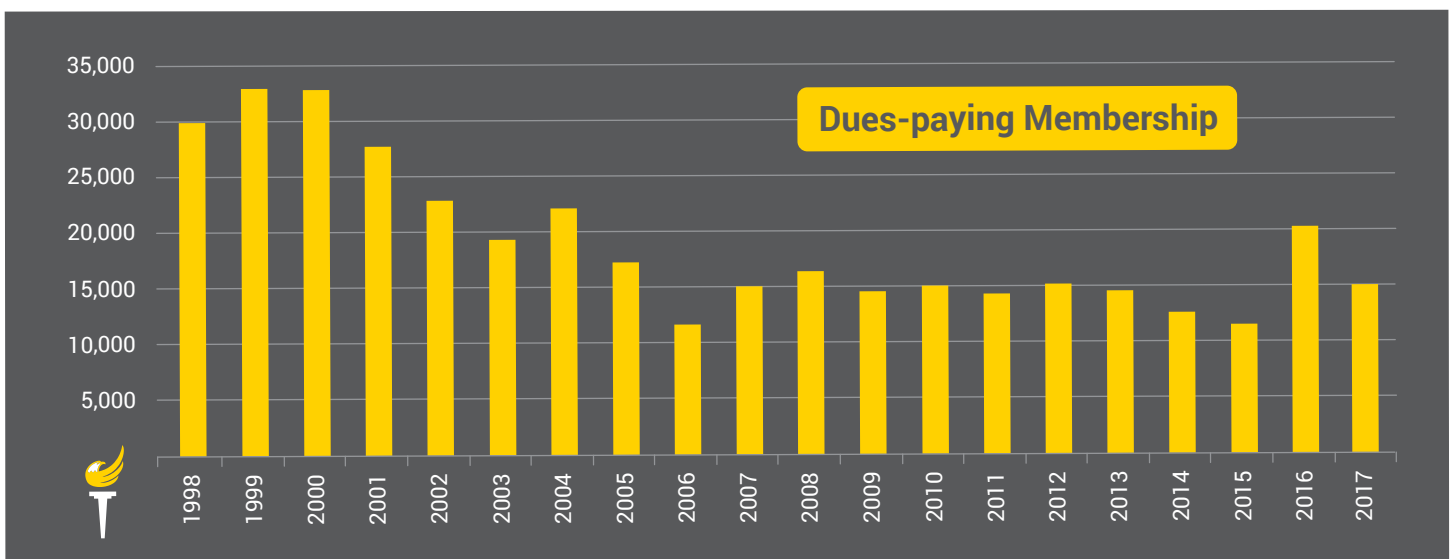
2017 **revenues exceeded** the average of the past five odd-numbered years by 17 percent.

2017 **revenues exceeded** that of each of the past 10 years, with the exception of two presidential election years: 2016 and 2008.



## Membership

Our membership swelled in 2016, with many folks joining for the first time. We knew that some would not stay with us for the long term. Many Libertarians invest year after year, and help the party grow. Others come and go. Our membership numbers dropped in 2017, but remained higher than the few years previous to 2016.



## Elected Officials Becoming Libertarian

In 2016, several elected officials chose to leave their previous political party and join the LP. That trend continued in 2017.

For example, in New Hampshire, three state representatives left the Rs or Ds and became Libertarians: Caleb Dyer, Joseph Stallcop, and Brandon Phinney.

**Caleb Dyer** was first. His switch was motivated in part by the Libertarian Party's having achieved **official party status** in New Hampshire in 2016, and the ballot access that accompanied that. He said,

*This fact should be seen as a warning to members of the majority that their constituency is slowly but surely growing discontent[ed] with increasingly partisan representation.... This is a truly golden opportunity [for Libertarians] to establish ourselves as a viable alternative to this representation and become advocates for principled, classically liberal policy.*

**Joseph Stallcop** said,

*I originally joined the Democratic Party in hopes of making a difference through critical thinking and my classical liberal viewpoint, yet with the lack of unbiased data in caucuses, as well as the backlash on votes I've independently made, it seems there is no longer a place for me here.... I will not be a political prisoner and will continue to speak my mind against hypocrisy.*

And with that, Stallcop transferred his affiliation to the Libertarian Party.

Upon switching from the GOP to the LP, **Brandon Phinney** said,

*I was not elected to do the bidding of a political party at the expense of my principles. Establishment partisan politics do nothing to protect the rights of people, but instead only serve to prop up and expand government with arcane plans to irresponsibly spend our money and enact burdensome regulations on business, small and large alike. The Libertarian Party platform gives us, as legislators, the best possible framework to expand social freedoms, support a free-market economy, and ensure the checks and balances on government power are enforced.*

In June, **Jeremy Rodman**, a city councilman in Glenwood City, Iowa, switched his party affiliation to Libertarian. He was elected as a Republican in 2015 to a four-year term. Rodman said,

*The values I grew up with are no longer the values of the Republican Party.*

In September, **Zakk Maher**, a county commissioner in Androscoggin County, Maine, joined the Libertarian

Party. He was elected to the seat in 2016 as a Republican, with 63 percent of the vote. His term runs through 2020. Maher wrote on his website,

*In an effort to reaffirm my own principles, as well as my passion for community service, I am enrolling in the Libertarian Party of Maine.*

*As a Libertarian, I feel confident that when I say we believe in you, there are no ifs, ands, or buts. And by freeing ourselves from the current political dichotomy, I am positive the path forward for the County, the State, and the Nation will be less turbulent, allowing our interpersonal relationships within our own community to bear much more fruit.*

We welcome each of these elected officials to their new home in the Libertarian Party and commend their courage to think differently and to follow their convictions.

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### Notable Achievement

Our highest-ranking elected Libertarian of 2017, Nebraska State Senator **Laura Ebke**, was chosen by the Nebraska unicameral legislature to head its judiciary committee.

*In a legislative body dominated about two to one by Republicans, elected on a nonpartisan ballot, I'm honored to have been elected by my colleagues to chair the Judiciary Committee. They know I'm both a libertarian and a Libertarian, and elected me without opposition, from both of the old parties. I'm grateful for their support.*

*In the Nebraska legislature, all bills are entitled to a hearing. The Judiciary Committee is responsible for hearing bills that deal with criminal and civil procedures, corrections issues, issues that touch on assorted civil liberties and constitutional rights. The chair is responsible for scheduling hearings on all legislation coming to the committee, and once hearings have been held, for scheduling executive sessions which would either move a bill onto the floor or hold it in committee.*

**Kudos and thanks** to Sen. Ebke and her fellow elected Libertarians who are out there representing our party and values in those official capacities.

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## Taking It To Court

The LP continually advocates for more liberty and justice, through many methods, including bringing lawsuits against entities we believe are violating the rights of our candidates, voters, or party.

### Lawsuit Against the Federal Election Commission

In 2017, U.S. District Court Judge Beryl Howell **ruled in favor of the Libertarian Party**, saying that we have standing to challenge a Federal Election Commission (FEC) decision which forbids us from receiving the full amount of a bequest all at once. The case arose from a \$235,575 bequest left to the party by supporter Joseph Shaber, who died in 2014.

We filed the case, *Libertarian National Committee v. FEC*, 1:16cv-121, in January 2016.

The FEC had asserted that the limit it places on individual donations to a political party (now at \$33,900 annually) should apply to bequests, thus allowing only amounts totaling under this limit to be distributed to the party yearly. The FEC's rationale was that an individual who makes a large donation could unduly influence politicians whom the party helps elect, into granting the donor special favors.

It is particularly absurd to impose such a limit on a person who is deceased, therefore incapable of peddling influence. The FEC maintained that the party lacked standing, arguing that the law does allow the party to receive the money all at once—if we abide by existing FEC rules, which allow individuals to donate larger amounts if they are placed in segregated bank accounts and used only for three particular purposes—purposes which exclude supporting our candidates.

The LNC countered that to allow spending only on those specified purposes violates the First Amendment speech rights of the party and our supporters. The judge sided with the LNC, denying the FEC's request for dismissal and allowing the case to proceed to the full U.S. Court of Appeals.

*It will be difficult for the FEC to show that there is any danger of corruption allowing a deceased individual to leave money to a party,*

said Richard Winger, publisher of *Ballot Access News*.

Libertarian National Committee Chair Nicholas Sarwark said,

*The FEC wants to enforce contribution limits against dead people, but not enforce them if a political party spends the money on certain purposes chosen by the government. We're fighting for our First Amendment right to use funds for a bequest for what the Libertarian Party needs, not what the government says we can use it for.*

**This lawsuit is ongoing, with cross motions for summary judgment still pending as of February 2018.**



## Lawsuit Against the Federal Election Commission and the Commission on Presidential Debates\*

In a victory for presidential debates' being more open, a U.S. District Court ruled on Feb. 1, 2017, **against the FEC**, in the case *Level the Playing Field et al v. Federal Election Commission*. The lawsuit, in which the Libertarian Party is a co-plaintiff, aims to make more fair the debate criteria set by the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD).

As we reported in *LP News* (Feb. 2017 issue), Judge Tanya Chutkan rebuked the FEC for its testimony in January during oral argument in the case. The FEC had attempted to justify its dismissal of a complaint issued by Level the Playing Field (LPF) against the CPD, ignoring mounds of evidence presented by LPF's lead attorney, Alexandra Shapiro.

Consistent with her comments in court, Chutkan's order stated that the FEC acted

*arbitrarily, capriciously, and contrary to law,*

with respect to its conclusion that the polling criterion set by the CPD for inclusion in the 2016 presidential debates was objective. The order directed the FEC to reconsider the plaintiffs' allegations against the CPD within 30 days, and to reconsider LPF's request for a rule-making within 60 days. Later that week, the FEC asked Judge Chutkan to reconsider her order, and asked for more time to respond. Four days later, the judge granted the FEC an additional 30 days.

The judge noted in her response that: the **FEC failed** to notify respondents; the **FEC failed** to consider evidence; the **FEC failed** to articulate its legal analysis; and the **FEC failed** to engage in reasoned decision-making.

*The court is perplexed by the FEC's assertion that it needs additional time to review the Plaintiffs' submissions given its earlier representations to the court that it had already carefully analyzed this evidence before dismissing Plaintiffs' administrative complaints. Nevertheless, the court will grant the FEC's request for additional time.*

RealClearPolitics reporter Melissa Cruz wrote,

*Except for 2008, the Commission on Presidential Debates **has been sued in every presidential cycle since it was formed in 1987**. Those court challenges, usually centering on opening the process to more candidates, have never gotten anywhere—**until now**. Those frustrated with the two-party domination of America's election process finally have something to cheer about, thanks to a federal judge's ruling against the Federal Election Commission. Reformers hope this decision could result in the next presidential debate stage being more crowded—and more independent—than it has been since the 1990s.*

In April 2017, the **FEC decided not to take enforcement action against the CPD**. So, in August 2017, Level the Playing Field filed a brief in U.S. District Court.

Libertarian National Committee Chair Nicholas Sarwark said,

*This case is waiting on a decision on motions for summary judgement in front of Judge Chutkan. She has previously ruled in our favor on the FEC's dismissal of our original complaint, but we know that fighting against the CPD in Federal Court is an uphill battle.*

\* Some content courtesy of Level the Playing Field. Emphasis added.



## Ballot Access Progress

In 2016, the Libertarian Party (LP) had access to the ballot in all 50 states and D.C. for the first time in many years. Every state's laws and requirements are different, thus the nature of our work is different in each state. Some states' thresholds are modest enough that our affiliates there can fulfill the requirements on their own. Other states' thresholds are more rigorous, such that our state affiliates need significant assistance from the national party to attain ballot access. We seek to help the state affiliates in the most difficult situations, and we work steadily and strategically throughout the election cycle.

In the 2016 election, the LP garnered the results necessary to **automatically retain ballot access in 37 states** for 2018. This put us further ahead than ever before for that time in the election cycle.

We promptly began working toward achieving ballot access in all 50 states (and D.C.) for 2018. Most of our work involves conventional petitioning, but we also work to encourage states legislatures to improve their state's ballot-access laws.

One such win came in 2017 when **Maine lowered the legal threshold for parties to attain ballot access there.**

In 2017, we also achieved ballot access in Arkansas. Together with LP Arkansas, we collected and submitted 15,000 signatures toward the 10,000 needed to qualify for party status. The national party invested about \$20,000 to help make this happen.

We also focused substantial attention and resources on ballot access in Ohio, spending a little over \$100,000 toward achieving ballot access there for 2018. The ballot-access requirements in Ohio are particularly egregious, requiring more than 55,000 valid petition signatures.

As if that weren't enough of a barrier to entry, there is a history of Republican operatives working very hard to twist laws to keep us off the Ohio ballot. Ken Moellman, one of our ballot-access champions and tireless leaders, said,

*In Ohio, repeatedly, we have been deprived of ballot access by Republican establishment hacks, who used a 'guileless dupe' to remove us from the ballot and then used their courts stacked with partisan judges to keep us off. But we will not be kept down, and we will not tolerate these injustices. We will achieve ballot access in Ohio and are doing the hard work every day to make that happen.*

The national party expects the Ohio Libertarian Party to attain ballot access for 2018 in the spring.

## Elections

While odd-numbered years are not election years in many areas of the country, in 2017 there were some local races on the ballot, and New Jersey and Virginia held statewide elections.

Steve McCluskey, a member of the Mississippi Libertarian Party, was elected mayor of the town of McLain on June 6. McCluskey won his three-way race with 52 percent of the vote, defeating the incumbent mayor. He is the first Libertarian to be elected to office in Mississippi's history.

McCluskey shared with 71Republic, for their July 9 coverage of the race, these remarks on his being elected:

*[Getting elected] feels great. There are people who look, sound, and think like me throughout Mississippi. They are Libertarians and simply did not know it, like I didn't know it for many years. They are 'salt of the earth' people who care for each other and want to be left alone by the government. I'm proud to give them a voice and am excited to see what the future holds.*

On Nov. 8, Libertarian candidates appeared on the ballot in Connecticut, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington.

Eighteen Libertarian candidates won their races for public office. After the election of these 18 Libertarians, the Libertarian Party had 156 elected officials serving or about to be sworn in, as of December 31, 2017.

**Jim Turney** — Altamonte Springs City Commissioner (FL)  
**Andy LeCureaux** — Hazel Park City Council (MI)  
**Christopher Nance** — Carthage Town Commissioner (NC)  
**Trishanda Barhorst** — Pleasant Hill Council (OH)  
**Jerry Nance** — Exeter Township School Director (PA)  
**Demo Agoris** — Houston Borough Town Council (PA)  
**Jake Towne** — Lower Nazareth Judge of Elections (PA)  
**Jake Towne** — Lower Nazareth Town Auditor (PA)  
**Greg Perry** — Rome Township Auditor (PA)

**Matt Schutter** — South Whitehall Judge of Elections (PA)  
**Jason Aucker** — Spring Township Auditor (PA)  
**Drew Bingaman** — Sunbury Constable, Sixth Ward (PA)  
**Jennifer Moore** — Upper Providence Township Auditor (PA)  
**James Fryman** — Victory Township Supervisor (PA)  
**Ed Tidwell** — Lago Vista Mayor (TX)  
**Apollo Pazell** — Copperton Metro Township At-Large Rep. (UT)  
**Joseph Cimaomo** — Covington City Council, Position 4 (WA)  
**Kevin Cline** — Long Beach City Council, Position 4 (WA)



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