

Liberty for America

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LNC Botched 2014 National Chair Election Sarwark Did Not Win on Round 2

At the end of the second round of National Convention balloting, Nick Sarwark was proclaimed the new chair. However, Party Bylaws make clear that in order to win you need 50% +1 of the votes. Like the almost-winner of two years ago, when the errors were corrected, Sarwark had exactly 50% of the vote.

Under our Bylaws, he was not the winner yet. Errors? In one state, Neale's 11 votes were interpreted as being in Roman numerals; he was given two votes.

The full details were reported to the LNC by Alicia Mattson, who did the vote count audit. We quote from her report to the LNC:

LNC Chair Election – Round 2

In the second round of the chair's race, the results reported on-screen were:

Sarwark – 194 (51.32%)
Neale – 144 (38.10%)
NOTA – 40 (10.58%)
TOTAL: 378 ballots cast

However, the audited results from the state tally sheets show the results should have been:

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Oregon

Our Libertarian Party affiliate in Oregon has a candidate for their First Congressional District. Libertarian James Foster is running against a Republican. The Oregon Reeves group, which claims to be the legitimate Libertarian Party of Oregon, has shown its true colors. They endorsed the Republican candidate and not his Libertarian opponent.

Readers may recall that several members of the same Reeves group appeared at the 2014 National convention, claiming that they should be added to the Oregon delegation. The delegates voted to support them and added them to the Oregon delegation.

And if you were one of the delegates who voted to add the Reeves people to the Oregon delegation, now you know what you actually voted for.

LNC In Action

According to reports from the LNC Meeting in Alexandria, VA in mid-September, the LNC paid \$7000 to cover staff bonuses for high revenues. At the same time, the National Convention apparently lost money, the LNC is sending out disastergrams saying they are out of money, one staff member was laid off, and the LNC does not have enough money on hand to cover current bills. At the meeting, National Secretary Alicia Mattson noted that some of these differences seemed very odd.

According to reports on Independent Political Report, at the LNC Meeting LNC Representative Evan McMahon said that the urgent fundraising appeal saying "We just laid off a staff member." or something similar was the most damaging letter he had ever seen. He reports having received over 20 phone calls from his own state on this matter.

The Treasurer's Report, as seen in the draft LNC Minutes for their September

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Sarwark Did Not Win

Sarwark – 194 (50.00%)
Neale – 153 (39.43%)
NOTA – 40 (10.31%)
Pojunis (write-in) – 1 (0.26%)
TOTAL: 388 ballots cast

Mr. Sarwark had exactly 50%, but not a majority which is necessary for election. Had these been the displayed results on-site, under our rules, Mr. Neale would have been dropped from the ballot, and there would have been a run-off between Mr. Sarwark and NOTA. While it is quite possible that Mr. Sarwark would have crossed the majority threshold in that scenario, it is not a given. At one point in the 2012 convention, a chair candidate had 50% of the vote, but he was not ultimately elected in the subsequent voting.”

The difference of 9 votes for Neale came from the Florida tally sheet, which was reported in the draft minutes to have been 6 votes for Sarwark, 2 for Neale, and 3 for NOTA. However the tally sheet showed 6 votes for Sarwark, 11 for Neale, and 3 for NOTA, with 20 delegates present and voting. This mistake could potentially have been caught by an on-screen review of the state-by-state totals.

The on-screen results in Columbus did not report the Pojunis write-in vote that was written in the margin of the Indiana tally sheet, though write-ins are allowed for any eligible person. The ballot is merely a listing of those who have been nominated. Pojunis had been removed from the ballot (un-nominated essentially), but that doesn't prohibit write-in votes for him. See RONR (11th ed.) p. 430 line 17 – p. 431 line 8, which states:

“Strictly speaking, nominations are not necessary when an election is by ballot or roll call, since each member is free to vote for any eligible person, whether he has been nominated or not. In most societies, however, it is impractical to proceed to an election without first making nominations. While members are always free to "write in," on a ballot, the name of an eligible person who has not been nominated, or to vote for an eligible non-nominee during a roll-call vote, under normal conditions it is likely that most members will confine their choice to the nominees. Without nominations, voting might

have to be repeated many times before a candidate achieved the required majority.”

Also see RONR (11th ed.) p. 441 line 25 – p. 442 line 2, which states:

“If the bylaws require the election of officers to be by ballot and there is only one nominee for an office, the ballot must nevertheless be taken for that office unless the bylaws provide for an exception in such a case. In the absence of the latter provision, members still have the right, on the ballot, to cast "write-in votes" for other eligible persons.”

Perhaps the Indiana delegation chair wasn't sure if he could count that write-in vote or not, and he did not include it in his own total number of votes cast, though it was clearly written in the margin of their tally sheet so the tellers could decide what to do with it. This mistake would not likely have been caught by an on-screen review of the state-by-state totals if the delegation chair was under the impression that he couldn't count that vote, though if the results came down to a difference of 1 vote, the Indiana delegation chair might have asked if that write-in should be counted, or it might have prompted a thorough double-checking of all the tally sheets which could have caught it.” ... so wrote Alicia Mattson

LNC in Action

National Committee meeting, includes “Financial reports through August 31 were provided in writing to the LNC. Mr. Hagan noted the primary areas in which we are below budgeted revenues are in general donations and also in board solicitations. He noted the total support and revenue figures in the financial reports include restricted donations for the building fund. If those amounts are excluded from consideration, the LNC is more than \$47,000 under budget (through August). Mr. Hagan discussed our current situation in which we have more current liabilities than we have cash to pay them. We continue to make progress on paying the remaining bill with the convention hotel in Columbus, Ohio. The convention fundraising banquet only raised \$23,000, but the budget for general donations had anticipated the banquet raising \$50,000. Mr. Benedict noted that the cash flow problem is not just because revenues are under budget, but that expenses are also running above budget, particularly ballot access expenses. No more ballot access petition drives are expected for this year. Mr. Hagan reported that compensation ex-

penses are running above the budgeted-through-August amount due to quarterly bonuses paid to staff. Mr. Hagan moved to amend the budget to increase revenue Line 45-Compensation by \$7,000 (from \$516,700 to \$523,700).”

According to the draft minutes of the last LNC meeting, Geoff Neale submitted a written report on the financial performance of the 2014 convention in Columbus. The bottom line of the convention financials shows that the event lost a little over \$6,000. This calculation does not factor in the \$23,000 revenues from the fundraising banquet, which are categorized in the accounting records as general donation revenues rather than convention revenues.

The LNC then voted whether to add the \$7000 to the budget line, because money for the staff bonuses had been omitted from the original budget. The motion was voted down 8-8. Voting “aye”: Feldman, Hagan, Johnson, Kirkland, Lark, McLendon, Sarwark, Vohra. Voting “nay”: Estrada, Goldstein, Mattson, McMahon, Olsen, Redpath, Tomasso, Wiener.

Readers will note that the money had already been spent. The above vote only changed the budget lines. As an actual expense, the LNC voted \$2020 to reimburse the LP of Minnesota for ballot access expenses incurred in 2012.

The LNC voted 14-0 to eliminate the Outreach Committee, charged with putting our party before the general public.

The LNC is grappling with the real problems associated with having electronic meetings rather than physical meetings for large committees. Your editor’s impression is that cheap technology for doing this well is not quite here yet. There was a perhaps-related IT Committee report to the LNC; the report was only distributed in paper form.

The previous LNC had split the Convention Oversight committee into separate Convention Management, Site Selection, and Oversight Committees. At the September LCN Meeting, the LNC voted unanimously to repeal this change and go back to a single committee.

Alicia Mattson is creating a detailed file of financial

records, contracts, etc., for past national conventions, for guidance for future conventions. If you happen to have useful information, I imagine that she would appreciate a copy.

Starchild has circulated a recommendation for changing how the National Office is organized, in particular to the cost of managing interns to get work done. His proposal includes:

This is the kind of problem that results from trying to keep too tight a level of control. If interns are allowed more autonomy in their work, the value they produce will be more likely to clearly exceed the opportunity cost of managing them.

Delegating more tasks, including managing volunteer interns, to other volunteers (like vice-chair Arvin Vohra who has already done this and LNC regional rep. Jim Lark who has volunteered to help) instead of relying on paid staff, will also help ensure net benefits.

Indeed I have suggested that the entire approach to compensation at the national office should be something more along the lines of:

- (1) Identify the work we want to see done, broken down into as many discrete tasks as possible
- (2) Solicit volunteers to do that work, using as many communication channels as possible, as visibly as possible (LP.org, LP News, state affiliates, etc.)
- (3) Put out for competitive bidding the tasks we can’t find qualified volunteers willing to take on, perhaps with some tasks lumped together into part-time staff positions, or full-time IF necessary. (Better to have lots of people doing different things they’re good at than to have one person asked to wear a whole bunch of hats, and then that person becoming indispensable” while other people are denied the op-

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portunity to improve their skills and develop a “farm team” for the party, so we won’t be left in the lurch when that “indispensable” person inevitably moves on, retires, dies, etc.)

(4) Make all salary and work contract information public, to encourage more people to get involved in bidding for work, and to ensure that expenses are reasonable (unreasonable pay and other costs are more likely to be incurred when operations are not transparent).

Brett Bittner sent the LNC a highly rational set of suggestions, based on orthodox management theory, as to how the LNC should advance. Independent of issues within Georgia, the general notions described here are well worth repeating:

“Colleagues,

As we are discussing goals, I see a glaring failure among libertarian groups, whether political, social, or otherwise. We are not setting strategic goals, period. Full stop.

This is something that I shared during my tenure as the Executive Director in Georgia. I've edited a few things to make it pertinent to our discussions here.

It's my belief that the Libertarian Party needs a VISION for our existence. In my opinion, that vision should be optimistic. We have yet to define what we are doing, and why we are doing it.

We also need a PLAN to attain that optimistic vision. That plan should be strategic and broad, yet focused enough to achieve that vision.

To supplement that plan we need GOALS that are aligned with the S.M.A.R.T. goal philosophy (<http://topachievement.com/smart.html>), so that there is no question about their focus, achievement (or lack thereof), and position on the path to success.

These goals should have action plans that assign TASKS designed to achieve them. They should be assigned to individuals or roles within our organization with defined timelines for completion with actionable consequences for failure.

I believe once we've defined these items, we will be

on a path TOWARD success, and I believe that we can then move to focus on the standards by which we operate.

As I believe we have discussed, it is my belief that the LNC should be working toward defining the "big picture" for our organization, our members, and our progress. All of which can be accomplished via the items I've outlined above.

During my tenure as Executive Director in Georgia, I saw the body float in between "fires" in need of extinguishing without any true, singular vision or even general direction goals. This makes accountability impossible. It also makes misunderstandings about roles, responsibilities, and actions much easier to bubble up. We've seen them turn into "fires," burning those who are genuinely loyal to our Party's success.

For me personally, it made the position stressful and tenuous at times, while being reassured that things are "going well." Often, I felt as though I was rowing a boat in a fog without a map or GPS and no idea if the people in that boat are rowing in the same direction, or if they even have paddles or are in the boat with me.

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Your Donations are not tax deductible. Federal law requires us to request the occupation and employer of donors of \$200 or more in a year. Paid for by Liberty for America. Your donations may be used in relation to a Federal Election. We can only accept donations made by American citizens with their own money.

I share these sentiments to provide you with some feedback that I feel is important to our success and a continued relationship working for liberty.

Thanks for taking a bit of time to read this, and I look forward to your response.
Brett C. Bittner”

LNC Adopts Goals

The LNC adopted goals for the next year, namely: They are (in descending order of support):

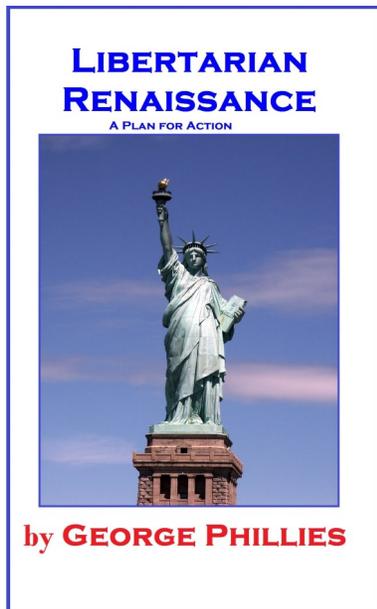
1. 1000 candidates in 2016
2. Take action to see that each state has operational affiliate by June 1, 2015
3. 300 candidates by 2016 trained in Who’s Driving
4. Updated issue-based outreach literature this term
5. 38-state party-status ballot access as of Dec 1, 2016
6. 200 elected Libertarian officials in Dec 2016

It also rejected a long series of possible goals. Goals that did not make the final cut were (in descending order of support levels):

1. Facilitate creation of a campus affiliate in each state by June 2016
2. \$2 million revenue in 2015
3. 20,000 sustaining members as of June 1, 2016
4. Sponsor a series of workshops in 2015 around the country like Success ’97
5. Raise at least \$3 million from July 1, 2014 – June 1, 2016 incl bldg fund
6. 20,000 active donors (\$1 or more) as of end of 2015
7. Increase by 10% the number of active county-level affiliates
8. Elimination of 1 federal-level entity/department by 2016
9. Put tools in place to allow our Presidential candidate to achieve 2 million votes

Where Your Money Went—LNC

At the end of September, national party membership was down to 13,734, meaning that the very modest Summer bump in membership has faded away. 13,734 national members represents a fall of 400 from the previous month. The number of active donors who are not members also fell, to 990, from a Summer peak of 1154. The number of new mem-



Libertarian Renaissance

George Phillipies has created and published a new edition of the New Path Plan for saving our party.

Libertarian Renaissance is an update of the 2010 edition with new information.

The volume is available on

Amazon Kindle
[amazon.com/Libertarian-Renaissance-Essays-Liberty-ebook/dp/B00E1SVGAK](https://www.amazon.com/Libertarian-Renaissance-Essays-Liberty-ebook/dp/B00E1SVGAK) and

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[smashwords.com/books/view/339159](https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/339159)

for ninety-nine cents.

bers for September was 94, which is less than half the next-smallest new-member single-month join rate. Membership numbers are enhanced by the increase in the number of life members, from 2295 at the start of the year to 2445 now.

For the month of August, the LNC had \$94 794 in income, had expenditures of \$116 467, and ended the month with \$22 467 in cash on hand. Alas, the LNC also ended with \$30 885 in debts and obligations, a number that does not include its huge mortgage. That is, short-term debts of the LNC are noticeably larger than money available to pay those debts.

The debts include \$1797 to Bigeye Direct for non-candidate mailing, \$900 to CBRE, Inc for “Transaction Screening PCA”, \$3339 to HBW group for Office Expense Buildout, and \$24 849 to the Hyatt Regency Columbus for “Convention Expense”. Readers are left to consider how a convention that came within \$6000 or so of breaking even was able to leave behind a debt of \$24 849.

So where did this money go? Staff paychecks in net came to \$24 752. Contract labor and cleaning services came to \$4064. External hires include \$3000 in legal fees, \$2400 for Administrative Support Services, \$1500 for FEC filing, \$200 for LP News writing and editing, and \$75 for pest control services. Other costs of employees, including DC withholding, health and dental plans, medicare, 401K contribu-

tions, payroll processing costs, social security, and workers compensation, not to mention Virginia tax withholding and unemployment, come to \$20 281.

There is a building. The Mortgage costs \$2900. Office furniture was \$318. The Association fee is \$165. Storage rent was \$102. Security monitoring is \$52. Office supplies came to \$618. Exterior signage was \$360. HQ Office Build Out was \$3271. The electric bill was an impressive \$835.

IT costs include \$2 for list monitoring, \$10 for WiFi supplies, \$15 for internet forms, \$50 for a toll free phone service, \$63 for address and phone verification, \$110 for file transfer software, \$514 for email server hosting, for \$616 for server warranty extension, \$753 for Website hosting, \$964 for a phone system and usage, and \$1662 for email marketing, a total of almost exactly \$5000. There was a \$9.95 media subscription to a Republican group, the Ron Paul Channel.

We raise money. Merchant service fees came to \$3573. Non-candidate printing came to \$3706. Shipping and postage services came to \$2023.

Payment of convention debts came to \$15000.

Last but not least, the LNC did politics...Ballot Access petitioning came to \$15904. Yard signs cost \$3595. A voter's guide advertisement cost \$1200. Libertarian Party promotions came to \$313.

Some Quotes from "Libertarian Renaissance"

The Practice of Scientific Membership Acquisition
As written in 2008:

No bones about it: We Need Growth, or We Will Die.

Fine. How do we return to days gone by when our membership was growing?

The first answer is to revive the LNC's credibility. We need to be seen as doing real politics. We need to put resources where they will have the biggest bang for the buck. Nobody wants to give time or money just to pay overhead. Yes, people understand

there has to be *some* overhead. But nobody (except the dominant coalition on the LNC, who voted for the current overhead level) considers our current overhead level to be acceptable.

Activists need and deserve activity. We need to show a lot of it, soon, or we will fail to justify being supported. Activity may start slowly, but there must be more as time passes. People need to be given a good reason to give time and money. When people see effective activity, they will be more open with their wallets. The New Path plan will give that effective activity. As a result, membership will start to grow.

The next way to expand the membership is to stop the bleeding. In the last five years we saw two massive spikes in the membership lapse rate: first from mid-2005 to early 2007; then from early 2008 to late 2009.

What happened in that timeframe that led longtime members to give up on the LP?

Main reasons were:

In the first spike, multiple changes from \$25 Dues to Zero Dues to \$50 dues to \$25 donations.

Dilution of the historical LP message and wholesale scrapping of the platform in 2006.

Recruitment (by members of the current LNC dominant faction) and nomination of former conservative Republicans Barr and Root in 2008, along with the adoption of a watered down, nuanced platform document.

Failure to engage in effective political activity, so the LP appeared to drop from sight.

People fled for the exits. We've now had a shocking loss of institutional memory in the LP. As late as 2005, more than half the LP's members had been members for at least five years. Now, the majority of the members have belonged for less than two years.

A change in direction and increased activity will staunch the loss of members. But that is not all we must do. There are several obvious ways to gain more members. The mechanism we chose must be evaluated scientifically. Fortunately, we have the tools and information needed for that analysis.

We explained in the Section on Raising and Spending Money why we don't plan to do cold-call direct mail. Under present conditions, it's just money down the drain. However, we have other ways to recruit new members.

First, we'll make maximum use of the marketing tools of 2010: blogs, podcasting, social media like Facebook and Twitter, You Tube, and other means.

Second, we will increase our membership by improving our Web presence. In 2008 we spend in excess of \$100,000 per year on electronic communications – the lp.org website, email and the like.

We were not getting nearly our money's worth. Outside experts generally agree our website could be improved a great deal, and is not optimized for the tasks we want it to fulfill.

The New Path team will do a complete redesign of lp.org. We will improve it dramatically and at a much lower cost as well. The new website will be a destination for all interested in liberty. Rather than engage in the “interruption marketing” of days gone by, we will pull people in to our message and then get their permission to communicate with them again. Establishing communication with a “warm” contact – someone who has interacted with us and given permission to us to reciprocate – has a very high success rate.

Pursuing warm contacts, people who have asked to hear from us, is Marketing 2010.

However, there is a third way to increase our membership. We've saved the best for last.

Our best customers – our best prospects by far for membership – are the people we know, and the people they know.

Our first line of new member sources is our own membership.

Why not say to all existing members: Bring a Friend. When you do, we will give you a benefit. After all, a new member is typically worth \$125 to our party. When you bring in a friend, you just gave the party \$125 at no cost to us. Potential benefits

could include:

one year's membership extension,
gift certificates to libertarian book companies, or
outright cash awards.

If every member brings in a new member every year, in 6 years we would have one million members. We aren't counting on that happening, but it certainly points in the right direction.

To recruit members, we also need to make better use of the media and public relations tools.

One of the 2010 LNC chair candidates was very vocal in his desire to use the media. On that score he is right. But here is where he is wrong: He is targeting media outlets that are highly unlikely to produce converts for us.

In fact, he has been focusing 100 percent on the area on the Nolan Chart opposite to where Libertarians live! That's the authoritarian Republican area where Fox News and Neocons dwell.

Furthermore, he is using the wrong success metrics. The proper metrics are not how many times he has been on conservative talk radio or on Fox News. The right metrics are the ones the New Path team recognizes, including:

number of party members,
monthly and annual revenue for the LNC,
membership lapse rates,
average member cash contribution,
number of identified Libertarians seeking contested public offices,
- cash on hand (in number of days expenses),
- visits to our web site,
- earned media: mentions by the regular press, and
- growth of state and local parties.

Of course, to advance those metrics you need to emphasize the Libertarian Party, not the Republican Tea Party.

Finally, some words about direct mail... and a pledge from James Oaksun.

We aren't fundamentally hostile to direct mail, no matter what the incumbent treasurer or his clique may say. Direct mail can, under certain circumstances

es, “work”. We may find unusual opportunities. Certainly a mailing to Ron Paul donors, if we had legal list access, might be very rewarding. However, we must note some challenges.

We will never have any success at direct mail if our response rates are 0.3-0.5 percent, not unless the responders are giving us big money. At present, they are not.

If we do decide that we need to do direct mail, we have ways to increase the response rate.

We need to use better lists and write better letters. Historically, we have largely mailed to far-right-wing and financial mailing lists. Those people were remote from us in 1998, and are far more remote from us now.

Probably the most sensitive variable in any direct mail effort is the response rate. In direct mail parlance, the increase in the response rate is called the “lift”. Organizations that do significant amounts of direct mail devote substantial resources to improving the lift through better copy writing and better list selection.

We can illustrate the importance of lift with an example. Let’s go back to that example earlier of obtaining 15,000 new members. What happens if the response rate is different, but all other rates are the same? If the response rate is different, so are the financial consequences. The sensitivity of the cash return to the response rate is staggering.

Response Rate
Net Present Value at 8%

0.3% (697,000) loss
0.4% (172,000) loss
0.5% 143,000 profit
0.75% 563,000 profit
1.0% 773,000 profit

Move the response rate from 0.3% to 1.0%, and the net return on recruiting 15,000 members goes from a \$700,000 loss to a nearly \$800,000 profit.

Step Seven -- Healing Our LNC

Earlier chapters discussed *what* the LNC needs to

do. Here we turn to a different question, namely how the LNC should organize in order to do its work. Perhaps also buried here is some discussion of how not to organize, at least if you want results.

Actually, this step's changes start happening before any of the other changes. To fix our Party, we first have to fix how it goes about its business. However, if we'd started with Parliamentary Procedure rather than Quick Fixes, Real Politics, Fund Raising, and Member Acquisition, most of you would have chucked this book into the nearest wastebasket. Or hauled it out to the firing range for some well-deserved target practice. So the last actually shall be first. The deeds in this last section really must start happening before anything else can.

If we want to have an effective LNC, we need to suppress the Roberts cult that tries to replace substantive discussion with hairsplitting centered on what should be entirely procedural rules. The Summer 2005 Policy Manual was 41 pages of narrow columns and large type. The December 2009 Policy manual is 56 pages of wide columns and small type.

We once had a Policy Manual that was simply an ordered set of operational motions passed by the LNC. We now have a bloated Policy Manual riddled with footnotes to Roberts, complete with the claim that if the LNC Secretary modifies the manual, and if the LNC does not reject the changes, the changes are binding. We need a Policy Manual that reflects LNC Policy, not a Policy Manual that reflects mind games of a few Committee members.

How do we get from here to there? An important answer is the leadership provided by whoever is chairing the meeting. Our face-to-face LNC meetings are extremely time-constrained. Parliamentary games that draw matters out so that real business cannot be transacted are unacceptable. Claims that the majority cannot proceed with substantive business without supermajority votes are unacceptable. A competent chair will keep LNC meetings on track so they may advance our march to the Libertarian future of peace, freedom, and prosperity.

...And now Libertarians will get to see if Nick Sarwark can pull this off.

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or regional groups

Help organize affinity groups

Provide art/graphics support

Make public statements;
internet, newspapers, talk
radio

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Liberty for America has a Federal PAC —we have actually supported real Libertarians when they ran for Federal office.

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Conference on the Libertarian Political Movement II

We are starting to line up speakers.

First Class Mail

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