

Welcome to our newsletter.

A Bit of History

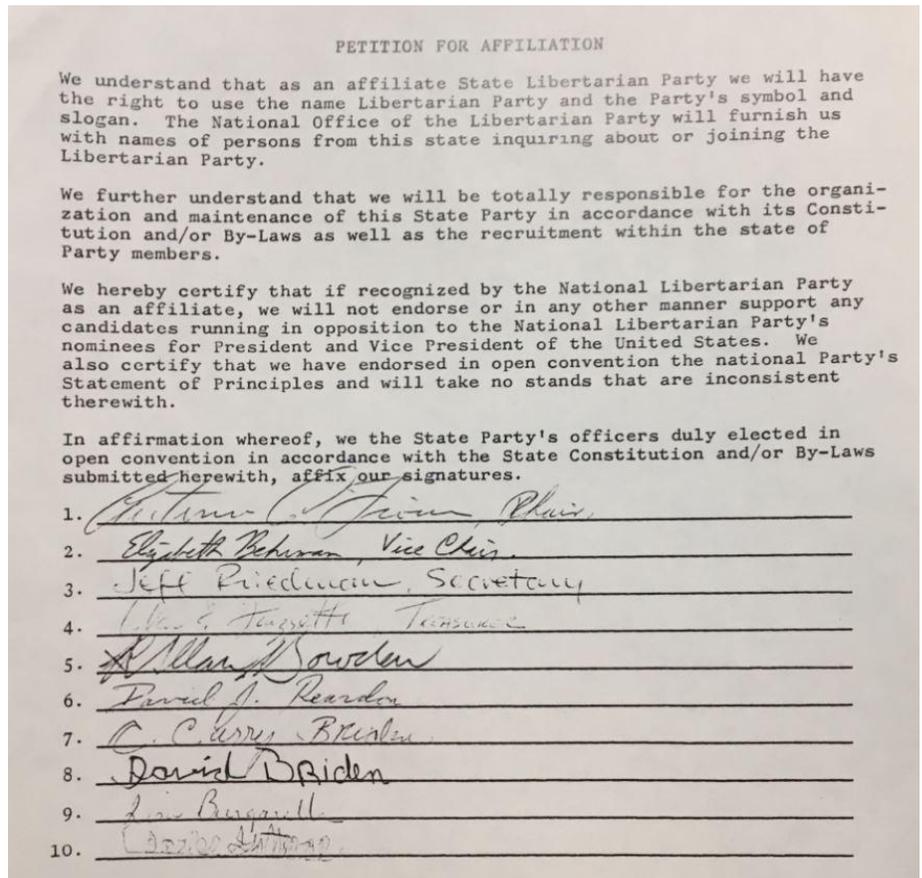
The Libertarian Party of Rhode Island was first formed in 1977. After petitioning the national Libertarian Party to become an affiliate, fourteen Rhode Islanders met at Asquino's Restaurant in East Providence on March 12 and held an all-day session in which they organized the party, adopted a constitution, and elected officers. Stewart Engel, formerly a libertarian gubernatorial candidate, was elected as the party's first chair.

Some forty-five years in the future, LPRI still has a chair who has previously run for office as a libertarian.

While updating LPRI's officer information following elections at this year's convention, Chair William Hunt stumbled across documents related to LPRI's founding, as well as issues of a newsletter circulated during the party's early days.

Members of the current executive committee loved the idea so much, we decided to revive the newsletter. We've preserved the original name, tagline, and many of the features of the newsletter. Look for a monthly update from the chair, a public policy brief from At-Large Member and Policy Director Shawn Mizener, as well as other features. We'll also be soliciting comments from our members in "From the Floor."

This, the inaugural edition of The Individualist, comes as LPRI gets ready to celebrate our 45th anniversary. As we prepare for the 2022 elections – LPRI's next, best opportunity to achieve party status – and get ready to celebrate 45 years of fighting for freedom in the ocean state, we'll have a lot to discuss, so make sure to look for The Individualist, delivered digitally to you on a monthly basis.



From the Chair

A few words from Chair William Hunt.

The last 16 months have been somewhat of a blur for many people I speak with. A commonly-shared sentiment is a feeling that we somehow lost a year to this pandemic and the subsequent authoritarian response by our elected representatives. It has become painfully obvious that our government has failed us at every level. What are you willing to do to get your life and liberty back?

My name is William “Billy” Hunt and I have spent the last six years fighting for Liberty in Rhode Island as a Libertarian candidate for State Representative in District 68. For those who have lost count, I have competed in three general elections since 2016 and one special election in 2019. My high-water mark was my last election in 2020 where I got over 40% of the vote. To put that in perspective, 2,995 people voted for a Libertarian candidate in District 68 compared to the 5,053 people (*in the entire state*) who voted for the Libertarian candidate for POTUS, Jo Jorgensen.

The best way to advance liberty in Rhode Island is to find Libertarian candidates to run for office and build our membership to support those candidates. As the newly elected Chairman of the Libertarian Party of Rhode Island, it is my intention to focus our party’s efforts on these ends exclusively; we cannot have meaningful impact from the sidelines, we need candidates to challenge the status quo and inject some principled libertarian philosophy into the political discourse.

I understand Libertarians by our very nature are individualists. We cringe at superfluous social interaction – we despise just the thought of organizing to gain political influence in the very government that’s overreach is antithetical to our very nature.

But, as Libertarians, we also understand “...only through freedom can peace and prosperity be realized.” It is our responsibility to protect our freedoms for ourselves and future generations. Taking back our government by political means is the option requiring the least amount of force, while also staying true to our shared Libertarian principles.

We have a great organization in this state with the resources and the experience you need to change the conversation in your own community. If you or anyone you know would like to learn what’s involved with running for office, I invite you to attend one of our monthly meetings and speak to a member of our Executive Committee. We are looking for candidates and volunteers to support those campaigns in every race in the state – join us in our fight for the future of our state.

- Billy Hunt
Chairman, LPRI

From the Floor

A space for LPRI members to have their voices heard.

After over a year of virtual meet-ups, LPRI has finally been able to return to in-person meet-ups.

On the right: Our first post-pandemic in-person meet-up was held in June at Craft Burgers and Beer in Pawtucket.

Below: Our July meet-up, held at Tickets Bar and Grille in Middletown.



Below: Our most recent meet-up was held at a new location, Back 40 in North Kingstown.



Our September meet-up will once again be held in Pawtucket. Be sure to check our social media for announcements on when and where it will be held.

Meet-ups are not only a great social event, but are the best place to meet members of the Executive Committee, as well as other members of the party. Our members elect our candidates, so if you're interested in running for office, meet-ups are a great way to get to know other party members.

Have something to say about recent political events? We want to hear from you! In future editions of the newsletter, From the Floor will feature input from members.

Send us your opinions, comments, and other miscellaneous musings about libertarian topics: communications@lpri.us. Use "From the Floor" in the subject line.

Policy Report

From Policy Director Shawn Mizener

As RI Legislators prepare for a potential special fall session ahead of normal business, it's worth reflecting on the output of the previous session. Of the 2,499 pieces of legislation from the last session:

- 1419 were introduced
- 886 passed
- 188 engrossed
- 6 were vetoed

Some of the priority issues tackled by the general assembly in an unprecedented year include allowing kids to [wear sunscreen in school without a doctor's note](#) (as long as it is FDA approved), [prohibiting the simultaneous release of 10 or more balloons at once](#) (9 or less, good to go), and designating the "Northern Star Coral" as the [official state coral](#).

There were also some troubling pieces of legislation. Despite the RI State debt [approaching \\$12B](#) with plenty of deficit spending adding to the debt service, the RI General Assembly passed a \$13.1B [budget](#), \$2B more than what Governor McKee asked for. They also passed a California-inspired green energy mandate, requiring [100% of all electricity sold in RI to come from a renewable energy source by 2030](#). The General Assembly continued to [erode 2A rights](#) in the state with more restrictions, and kicked the can on [cannabis legalization](#) another year.

Also interesting is the way the General Assembly has been conducting business. Consider the following: \$166k was spent on Plexiglass installation for our elected officials to "safely" sit at the state house, yet [our legislation racked up](#) \$523,828 through the month of June for the Senate to rent out space at the Rhode Island College campus, while the House of Representatives' operations lease of Vets Auditorium cost over \$4k for one legislative day per week. This is all in spite of proxy voting and remote sessions being conducted, all while the legislature blocked a majority of open sessions to the public in-person and online. The Plexiglass has since been taken down.

Here are some topics to keep an eye on:

- The General Assembly's top Democrats [hand selected](#) the 18 individuals responsible for redrawing the congressional (voting) districts for their seats (nothing to see here, folks).
- McKee issued an [executive order](#) to extend the state of emergency due to COVID-19, continuing Raimondo's initial executive order from March 2020, and issued [another](#) separate state of emergency for the Delta Variant. He also enacted another [executive order](#) to require schools to require masks to be worn. Rhode Island's state of emergency is currently slated to expire on September 1.
- ['Everything is under consideration'](#) McKee says as the state debates the implementation of more COVID related restrictions, and has already mandated vaccinations for staff at state-licensed health care centers

It is abundantly clear Rhode Island faces many challenges in the coming year, but it is clear that Democrats and Republicans are not providing adequate solutions. We need to elect Libertarians to office to provide a voice of reason at the local and state levels. Visit <http://www.lpri.us> to donate, volunteer, or run for office today and help us #TurnRIGold.



Image Source: [WJAR](#)



Image Source: [LPRI Facebook Page](#) (from 2A Rally 6/10/2021)



Image Source: [WPRI](#)

Help LPRI Grow

The fight for liberty in the ocean state needs you.

If there's one thing we've learned over the course of the last eighteen months, it's that we can't count on anyone, especially politicians in the major parties, to defend individual liberty during times of crisis.

The departure of former governor Gina Raimondo temporarily seemed like a bright spot. From sending the police door-to-door to boot New Yorkers early in the pandemic, to



shutting down the home and garden sections of big box stores, targeting school districts that disregarded her guidance, and shutting down gyms without any evidence they were contributing to the spread of COVID-19, Raimondo showed a lot of contempt for local governance and the rights of individuals and private businesses. Then-lieutenant governor Daniel McKee, a sometimes critic of Raimondo's

pandemic policies, looked to be a moderate voice. But, shortly after taking office, began to move to the left in the hopes of avoiding a more progressive Democratic challenger in the 2022 election.

And let's not forget the way libertarians were treated by Rhode Island government agencies during the buildup to the 2020 election. As the state ushered in universal mail-in voting and removed the signature requirements for absentee voters, third-party candidates received no help from the government. None of the accommodations made for voters or state candidates for office, who were allowed to collect signatures for petitions to get on the ballot electronically, were made for presidential candidates.

Republicans and Democrats receive automatic ballot access, so the need to gather signatures in-person wasn't an issue for the major parties. But it was for libertarians, who, thanks to the ballot access rules created by the two-party duopoly that create barriers of

entry for minority voices, must petition for ballot access. At a time when the state was telling people to stay home and avoid social interactions, it was also giving third-parties no choice but to seek out contact with strangers.

We can't risk this happening again. No one should ever be forced to make a choice between political representation and personal health. We need to grow the libertarian party and obtain ballot access. But we can't do this alone. We need the support of liberty-loving individuals in Rhode Island.

That's why we're asking you to join our campaign to #TurnRIGold. Even a donation of \$5 can help us defray the cost of essential items like website hosting fees, social media ads, or flyers and palm cards that help spread the libertarian message to the masses.

We're always looking for volunteers to help. Whatever your skill set, there are ways you can contribute to the party and help us grow.

Interested in running for office? Our Executive Committee has the experience to help get your campaign off the ground.

Send us a message today to find out how you can play a role in advancing liberty in Rhode Island.

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