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From the Chair

A few words from Chair William Hunt.

Last month, to close out 2021, I marked the beginning of the end of the centralized response to this pandemic. In the face of a new variant, increasing cases, and the inevitable post-Christmas and New Year's surges, I pointed out the government's desultory response to this pandemic. From the school committees to the US Capitol, every action has been extemporaneous, authoritarian, and worst of all ineffective—people are starting to notice.

As thousands of Rhode Islanders have tried to navigate the state's overwhelmed COVID testing process, it is hard not to draw comparisons to the DMV, UHIP, 911 services, and the Non-Emergency Medical Transport debacles. We have overpaid politically connected contractors to provide overly-complicated technical interfaces at inflated costs, with sub-par results. The taxpayers are not only the ones paying for the government's failure; they are also the ones directly suffering from the consequences.

Having difficulty scheduling an appointment to register your car is frustrating—but not ruinous. Being unable to access your state-provided healthcare and welfare benefits is unfortunate and potentially damning. Mismanaged non-emergency and emergency medical and fire services could be calamitous. Being unable to access COVID testing in the middle of a pandemic is a public health disaster—a self-inflicted “category five” crisis.

With nearly two years of science and historical data, the government failed to anticipate that this is a seasonal and regional virus. Instead of using the enormous amount of money and resources available to them to plan for the inevitable, they bought into their own hype, drank their own Kool-Aid, and doubled-down on the vaccines and masking as the ONLY solution to this crisis.

Governor McKee was “ramping down” testing in the beginning of November, just when he should have been ramping up. Last month, President Biden promised half a billion (“with a B”) free tests to be made available. But most are still not available and probably will not be available until after this current surge. People have died and will continue to die because federal and local governments are failing to prioritize and administer therapeutics as a scientifically-proven effective way of preventing severe illness from this virus.

Despite experiencing some of the highest rates of infection in the country, Rhode Island is also doubling-down on mask, vaccine, and other authoritarian mandates. Political leaders are losing all credibility. People are starting to realize the cure is way worse than the disease. This government-enabled corporatism demonstrates all of the pitfalls of relying on a centralized body to solve all of your problems: you get few options (if you get any option at all), you get bad service, you pay a high price, and the political class and their donors seem to be the only ones who benefit.

There is no better time than now to introduce your friends and family to the ideas of

liberty, limited government, and the free market. The free market is certainly not the perfect solution, but we are not comparing it to perfection—it is certainly better than anything we are currently doing. In a truly free-market, entrepreneurs not only compete to provide the best product and customer service at the lowest price, they bear all of the risk if their product or service is a failure. More importantly, when a product is ineffective or unwanted, it is not made compulsory.

Stay defiant as you endure the hysteria and fear-mongering by those who have yet to realize there is no reward for compliance. Know that as people are forced to confront the reality that everyone will eventually contract this virus, they will begin to lash out as their worldview is shattered. Their voices are the loudest right now, but they are overwhelmingly in the minority. It is always darkest before dawn and, by sheer force of will, I believe rational heads will prevail and this will all be over by spring. But it will only be over when we decide it is over, we need your help to ensure the scales tip in the favor of liberty.

-Billy Hunt
Chairman, LPRI

Policy Report

The legislature is back in session. Liberty-lovers must be vigilant.

The General Assembly met on January 4 to resolve several pending matters from its 2021 session and begin its 2022 session.

Unresolved business from the 2021 session included:

- Gov. Daniel McKee's plan to use \$119 million in American Rescue Plan Act State Fiscal Recovery Funds. Including changes made by the legislature, the final package, which has since been signed into law, includes \$6 million for child care, \$38.5 million for support services to children and families, \$32 million for small businesses impacted by COVID-19, \$29.5 million for affordable housing and broadband, and \$13 million for tourism, hospitality, and event industries. Other changes made by the legislature include reporting requirements, specifics about how funds can be used, and accountability measures. For more, visit:
https://www.rilegislature.gov/pressrelease/_layouts/RIL.PressRelease.ListStructure/Forms/DisplayForm.aspx?List=c8baae31%2D3c10%2D431c%2D8dcd%2D9dbbe21ce3e9&ID=372245&Web=2bab1515%2D0dcc%2D4176%2Da2f8%2D8d4beebdf488
- The legislature also overrode McKee's veto of a bill that creates a statewide registry for short-term rental properties. Registration is required for "any short-term rental property listed for rent on the website of any third-party hosting platform that conducts business in Rhode Island." According to the legislature, the bill will "ensure compliance with safety and tax regulations, with owners' contact information in

case of an emergency.” Rep. Lauren Carson (D-Newport), one of the bill’s sponsors, [said](#) it “doesn’t make any sense to leave this job to our overburdened municipalities.”

Other carryover business from 2021, which has not yet been resolved, includes the work of the reapportionment commission, responsible for redistricting in the wake of the 2020 census.

For 2022, one of the largest and most immediate legislative priorities is the state budget. McKee is expected to submit a budget proposal later this month. Speaker of the House Joe Shekarchi and Senate President Dominick Ruggerio also gave a preview of matters the legislature is likely to give priority in their opening remarks for the 2022 session.

During his [opening remarks](#), Shekarchi indicated draft legislation related to marijuana legalization will soon be before both the House and Senate. He also listed several other pandemic-related issues, such as “the staffing shortages straining our hospitals and the entire field of health care. “

“We will continue to listen to the concerns of the business community struggling with the pandemic and meeting the challenges before us in education. We are ready to make the appropriate investments with federal funding through ARPA and other federal programs.” said Shekarchi.

Ruggerio also mentioned marijuana legalization in his [opening remarks](#). His other stated goals include implementing legislation, passed by the Senate last year, to see the state use 100% renewable electricity by 2030. Ruggerio also expressed a desire for universal pre-kindergarten within 5 years, talked about tuition forgiveness for nurses and teachers, and expressed a desire to overhaul healthcare. He also wants to consider a “comprehensive package of climate jobs legislation” and “shore up our water infrastructure.”



From the Floor

A space for LPRI members to have their voices heard.

As LPRI approaches its 45th anniversary, this month’s edition of From the Floor brings us back to where it all began. Taken from the very first edition of The Individualist, published in June 1977, this appeal for members and funds was written by Stew Engel, the party’s first official chairman.

Party Needs Members, Funds

Top priority for the next year is going to be placed on recruiting new members, especially high-school and college students residing in R.I. The reason for the emphasis is that we will need people available in the summer of 1978 to petition signatures to get LP

candidates on the ballot for the 1978 general election.

Although the MacBride-Bergland ticket was on the ballot in 32 states, only two were in New England. In terms of votes, New Hampshire placed 14th and R.I. 23rd of the 32. Because of our state's small size and population, R.I. is logically the easiest state in New England in which to promote the Libertarian philosophy of individual freedom. The publicity we can generate for our philosophy by running candidates far exceeds any publicity we could generate with advertising dollars. It is crucial that we field at least one (preferably two) state-wide candidate in 1978, as well as a few local candidates, if the news media are going to take us seriously. We cannot run candidates if we can't get them on the ballot; thus the necessity for recruiting members who will have at least part of the summer free.

Todd Becker is in charge of our membership drive. If you know of any high-school or college students who may be interested in joining the party and/or organizing a Libertarian Club in their school, please contact Todd at PO Box 449, Brown University, Providence , 02912...

Second priority is the establishment of a statewide Libertarian Speaker's Bureau. Karen Howard will be responsible for organizing this activity and expects it to be in the operation by September. If you are interested in speaking out for the cause of liberty, or know where we might get some speaking engagements, please contact Karen at 201A Washington Road, Barrington 02806... Participation in the Speaker's Bureau should be considered a "must" requirement for anyone who wants to be a candidate in 1978.

Money will be required to support the above activities, especially for ads in school papers to recruit students. It takes about \$5.00 per member per year just to pay for the newsletter, so very little money is left over from dues to pay for special activities. Your contributions, which may be designated for some specific purpose if you desire, will be most instrumental in helping us spread the word. Don't forget, one-half of your contribution, or up to \$100.00 (200 joint) may be claimed as a deduction.* If you have any ideas regarding fund-raising, please contact me..."

-Stew Engel

*This deduction is no longer allowed in the present day.

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Have something to say about recent political events? We want to hear from you!

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

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45 Years of LPRI

And the party's old problems are also our new problems.

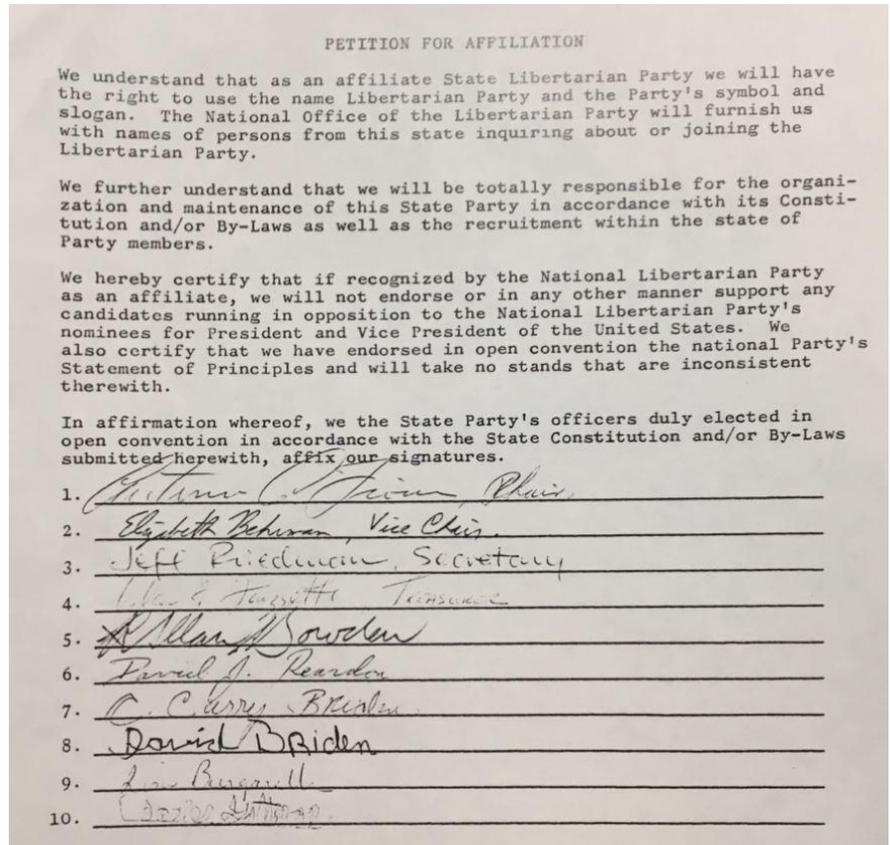
Not a lot has changed since the party was first affiliated on March 12, 1977. Then, as now, one of the party's top priorities was recruiting new members. And then, as now, one of the reasons the party needs members is because we will soon be circulating a ballot access petition to ensure voters have libertarian choices for candidates in state and local elections for the 2022 midterms.

We have a lot planned to celebrate our 45th anniversary. Look for updates to the party's logo on social media, and themed meet-ups designed to put libertarian candidates seeking the party's endorsement in front of its members. But, perhaps, most importantly, we're also launching a membership drive.

LPRI has been around for 45 years. To celebrate that, our goal is to bring 45 new members to the party this year. Let's make 2022 the year of the libertarian wave, not only at the ballot box, but by swelling the ranks of the party.

What are some of the perks of becoming a member?

- Only members are eligible to vote at our annual convention. In election years, votes on whether to award the party's endorsement to libertarian candidates for state and local office are held at conventions. Elections for Executive Committee officers occur at conventions, too.
- Only members can hold party offices. Members of the Executive Committee and directors and members of other committees that are part of the party's official structure, such as the Outreach Committee, Communication Committee, and Policy Committee, must be dues-paying members. If you have any interest in party leadership, or serving on a committee within the party, you must first become a member.
- Only members can serve as delegates to the Libertarian National Committee's nominating convention for presidential candidates. The number of delegates LPRI receives at the LNC convention is also determined by the number of members who live in RI and are enrolled with the LNC, and by those who are registered LPRI members. Growing our membership helps give us a larger voice at the national level.



So, help us in our ongoing bid to #TurnRIGold. Yearly membership dues are only \$40. Visit <https://lpri.us/membership-account/membership-levels/> to sign up to become a member.

If you're already a member, there's still plenty you can do to help the party. 2022 is an election year and we'll need volunteers to help us with campaigning and ballot access.

[Click Here to Volunteer](#)

[Click Here to Donate](#)



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