

# Now it's your turn to vote on the LP Strategic Plan.

## THE FUTURE OF THE PARTY IS IN YOUR HANDS

Dear fellow freedom fighter,

**Here's a blunt question:** Is the Libertarian Party as successful as it should be?

I'll tell you my answer: No.

Are you satisfied with the progress we've made toward increasing individual liberty in America?

I'm certainly not.

And neither is the Libertarian National Committee (LNC), the LP's board of directors.

### **We can do better.**

That's why last December, while the presidential votes were still being counted in Florida, the LNC launched a major strategic planning effort – unprecedented in the party's history.

**\* After months of work, the result of that effort – a comprehensive 200-page report – has been issued by the Strategic Planning Team.**

The report lays out a one- to three-year strategic framework for the Libertarian Party.

When fully implemented, I believe this Strategic Plan will firmly establish our party – in the minds of voters and the media – as the dominant third party in America.

Keep reading, and I'll outline the six major goals in the plan. And the 20 major political strategies. (Some are tried-and-true political tactics. Some are innovative and new.)

**The Strategic Plan is so big – and important – that the LNC has scheduled a special meeting in October to finalize it.**

At the meeting, they will hammer out priorities, set numeric targets for each goal, and consider how-to “action plans” for implementing the plan. But there are three critical questions we're

going to ask you to answer before the LNC holds this meeting . . .

- \* Are the plan's six major goals ones our members will support?**
- \* Are the plan's 20 political strategies ones our members will unite behind?**
- \* And, most important: Which goals should take priority?**

Your input is urgent.

It's critical that the LNC knows exactly what you think, so they can make informed decisions in October. (And in December, too, when they vote on the party's budget for next year).

**After you read about the plan, please fill out the enclosed response form.**

We need you to prioritize the six goals. And to select your favorite strategies.

## **Please, give us your honest opinion.**

I believe these six goals and 20 strategies – which form the core of the plan – are ones every Libertarian Party member can support.

**Why?** Because, while creating the plan, the Strategic Planning Team eagerly sought input and advice from Libertarian activists across the USA.

The plan's goals and strategies won enthusiastic support from the entire 17-member Planning Team. Every single member.

That's not just significant . . . it's astonishing.

Have you ever been part of a large group trying to decide where to have dinner? Or which movie to see? If so, you know it's devilishly difficult for a large group to reach a consensus.

Now, imagine 17 opinionated Libertarians trying to agree about goals and strategy. For the entire Libertarian Party. For the next one to three years.

**Sounds like an impossible task, doesn't it?**

## **The impossible has become reality.**

Over the past several months, the Planning Team met seven times. At the first meeting, they gathered advice and recommendations from more than 50 state chairs, state executive directors, and other state activists.

**Then they went to work.**

Starting with 700+ suggestions, they distilled the Strategic Plan down to a final six crucial goals and 20 dynamic strategies. It wasn't easy . . .

There were frequent debates. Vigorous disagreements. A little shouting. A lot of quiet persuasion. Occasional compromises. Plenty of passion and energy.

\* But by their last meeting, the team had developed a strategic vision – that all 17 members of the team could support.

The Strategic Planning Team was a diverse bunch: State chairs. Elected officials. National staff. Candidates. East Coast, West Coast, and in-between. Twenty-five-year activists. Members who joined within the past few years.

**They put their differences aside.** They worked together to develop a strategic plan they all could support.

## And that's why I'm so optimistic about this plan.

I've seen up-close how much can be achieved when the LNC unites behind a set of goals.

Now, imagine what we can achieve if the entire Libertarian Party acts as a team. If every Libertarian works together to battle the growing power of the government – and to advance the cause of human liberty.

\* **We'll be unstoppable.**

I often compare the LP to one of those old Roman galleys. Except, in our "Ship of Liberty," no one is chained to an oar. There's no slave master with a whip. Everyone is free to do whatever he or she chooses.

But there's a problem: If everyone rows in a different direction, the ship just moves in aimless circles.

**Even worse:** If some people spend their time criticizing the way other people are rowing – instead of picking up an oar and rowing themselves – then we hardly move at all.

And if some people drop their oars and start hitting the other rowers – well, then we're sunk.

The only way for our "Ship of Liberty" to make progress is for the crew to row together to reach our common objectives.

The fact that 17 Libertarians could gather input from so many activists – and distill it down to a Strategic Plan that got broad support from the entire team – is remarkable.

## Finally, we can all row in the same direction.

However, the real challenge lies ahead.

We must be 100% certain that these goals and strategies are ones our members, contributors, and activists can unite behind. And . . .

Most crucially, we must determine which goals and strategies are the top priorities.

**I'll be honest:** We won't have the resources to do everything in the Strategic Plan all at once. We must prioritize.

## **That's why your input – right now! – is critical.**

### **\* Are the six goals ones you can unite behind?**

How would you prioritize them?

### **\* Can you endorse the 20 strategies?**

Which ones make you most enthusiastic?

Finally, are you willing to help implement the Strategic Plan with donations – of both time and money?

When you finish reading this letter, please fill out the response form. Give us your honest opinion. We can't take the next step until we hear from you.

Here are the Strategic Plan's six goals:

## **■ GOAL 1: Increase the number of Libertarians holding public office.**

Here's the bottom line: Public office is where Libertarian ideas are transformed into political reality. Where theory becomes public policy.

Libertarian officeholders are craftsmen who turn an architect's drawing into a beautiful building. They pound the nails. They pour the concrete. Brick by brick, they build the Libertarian society we all want to live in.

More LP officeholders means our Libertarian society can be built faster. Every additional officeholder moves our Libertarian future closer – day by inexorable day.

Is there any more indispensable goal?

## **■ GOAL 2: Strengthen Libertarian Party state and local organizations.**

Napoleon once said: "An army marches on its stomach."

With all due respect to that pygmy French tyrant, a political party marches – and succeeds – on its affiliates.

**Well-organized and energetic affiliates run more candidates.** Win more elections. Get more publicity. Recruit more members. Have more clout.

Imagine a Libertarian Party with a thriving affiliate in every state. And with thousands – or tens of thousands! – of dynamic county and local affiliates. That's our goal.

### ■ **GOAL 3: Increase the party's support base – members, contributors, and volunteers/activists.**

Picture a race car without fuel. That's the Libertarian Party without members.

\* More members equals more fuel.

**The Republicans and Democrats know that.** They're constantly trolling for new members, contributors, volunteers, and activists.

If we want to be competitive, we must do the same thing. Building a new political party requires people to run for office, donate money, staff outreach booths, write letters, design websites, and more.

If we're in this race to win, we must fill our tank. More members and activists are the fuel we need.

### ■ **GOAL 4: Increase the Libertarian Party's market share among youth.**

There's a joke that the only remaining bastions of communism in the world are North Korea, Cuba . . . and America's universities.

**It's funny – but there's some truth in it.**

It's also scary, because we can't afford to lose a generation of young Americans. We can't let them be seduced by Big Government propaganda. We can't let the Green Party become the "trendy" political movement on campus.

If we lose America's high schools and colleges, we don't just lose the intensity and enthusiasm of youth. We lose the next generation of voters and activists.

**We must fight back.** Young people are least attached to the older parties, and most receptive to new ideas. Those "new ideas" must be Libertarian ideas.

### ■ **GOAL 5: Increase public awareness of, acceptance of, and support for Libertarian ideas.**

You've heard the zen question: If a tree falls in the forest and no one hears it, is there a sound?

**Here's Libertarian zen:** If the Libertarian Party has a great idea, and voters don't hear about it, is there a sound?

\* The answer, sadly, is no.

**We need to break the silence.** We need to be visible. We need to make Americans aware of who we are and how we can benefit their lives.

That visibility will be the elixir needed to help our affiliates thrive, and our candidates succeed.

Enough visibility will also firmly establish the Libertarian Party as the dominant third party in America.

## ■ GOAL 6: Remain the “Party of Principle” as we grow.

Last year, Rasmussen Research discovered that 16% of Americans are libertarian. That’s, what – 20 million voters? Thirty million? Forty million?

\* But there’s an asterisk by that 16%. Most of those “libertarians” are not as philosophically consistent as you. Yes, they fall into the libertarian quadrant. But they’re not 100% libertarian.

**So what?** To grow into a competitive political party, we must welcome all Americans who wish to move public policy in our direction. That means people who disagree with us on some issues.

But we don’t want to catch the “Reform Party Disease” – and end up standing for nothing. We need to achieve growth, while still remaining the “Party of Principle.”

## That’s it: The six major goals. What do you think?

On the enclosed response form, please tell us: Which goal should be #1? #2? #3? And so on.

**But please** – wait until you read the rest of the letter, so you can take the 20 strategies into account when making your choices.

By the way, at its October meeting, the LNC will set numeric targets for each goal. The targets will be based on the priority assigned to each goal, and on available resources. The LNC will also determine ways to measure progress.

**In support of the six goals, the Strategic Planning Team recommended 20 strategies.** Here they are, condensed into seven strategic clusters:

## Message Development

- **Strategy 1:** Define, develop, and promote the Libertarian Party brand.
- **Strategy 2:** Create high-quality presentations of Libertarian ideas.
- **Strategy 3:** Redevelop the LP Platform to enhance electoral success – without compromising our core beliefs.

**Think about the great American brand names:** Coca Cola. IBM. Disney. We need to build a “Libertarian” brand that’s just as popular and well-known, using modern market research and sales techniques.

We also need to publicize our “brand” through memorable advertisements, brochures, websites, speeches, and more. And we need to support that image with an LP Platform that presents our ideas in a way voters will embrace.

## Organization

- **Strategy 4:** Help state affiliates create “action plans” for success, track progress, and provide needed know-how and support.
- **Strategy 5:** Define relationships between national, state, local, and campus LP organizations.
- **Strategy 6:** Expand and strengthen local, city, county, and campus affiliates.

The LP has the largest and strongest network of state and local affiliates of any third party in America. But we can make them even stronger.

These three strategies are a “weight training” program that will build the political muscles of our affiliates.

## Candidates & Campaigns

- **Strategy 7:** Recruit more and better qualified candidates.
- **Strategy 8:** Target races and allocate resources to maximize our victories.
- **Strategy 9:** Encourage campaigns to coordinate activities with one another.

**Winning elections is the “Golden Grail” of every political party.** And winning starts with good candidates. People who are community activists. Business leaders. Public figures. We’ve got to find them and convince them to run – as Libertarians.

Then, we need to support winnable campaigns with money, expertise, and advertising. And finally, we need to encourage campaigns to work together for greater impact.

## Growth & Development

- **Strategy 10:** Recruit more new supporters.
- **Strategy 11:** Increase the commitment of current supporters.
- **Strategy 12:** Strive to achieve a left/right balance among members.

You don’t have to be a math whiz to figure out that more members means a more successful Libertarian Party. Additional candidates. A bigger budget. Stronger affiliates.

**But we don’t merely want people to “sign on the dotted line.”** We need to move members up the escalator of activity – from contributors to LP activists. (While making sure the party doesn’t tilt too much in a liberal or conservative direction.)

## Internal Education & Training

- **Strategy 13:** Provide training for Libertarian candidates and LP organizations.
- **Strategy 14:** Implement a program of ideological internal education.

In real estate, the secret is location, location, location. In politics, it’s training, training, training.

A Libertarian who attends a candidate training class will run a better campaign. An activist who

attends a political seminar will achieve greater success. And a Libertarian who attends a communications class will present our ideas with added polish and persuasiveness.

**Training is the key.** (At the same time, we need to make sure all our members understand exactly what we stand for, and why.)

## Networking & Political Action

- **Strategy 15:** Target public opinion leaders to espouse libertarian ideas.
- **Strategy 16:** Target groups to support LP efforts.
- **Strategy 17:** Encourage Libertarians to get more involved in the political process.
- **Strategy 18:** Focus resources to repeal federal drug prohibition by 2010.

Who's on the cover of People magazine this week? Some movie star? A rock-n-roll or rap artist? A professional athlete?

Like it or not, these people hog the media spotlight. They pop up again and again in magazines, newspapers, and TV shows.

**Wouldn't it be nice if some of those folks started touting libertarianism?** They could reach millions of Americans. We need to get them (and other influential Americans) on our side.

We also need to network with organizations – from your local anti-tax group to the League of Women Voters – to garner opportunities to spread our message. And we need to encourage LP organizations and individual Libertarians to get involved in political processes at all levels.

**Finally, we want to achieve an audacious goal within the next decade:** Repeal drug prohibition at the federal level. This could be the “wedge issue” that builds our clout, appeals to voters ignored by the two major parties, and expands our market share among youth.

## Internal Culture

- **Strategy 19:** End the “magic bullet” fallacy. Develop awareness that success requires adequate resources.
- **Strategy 20:** Increase activism by rewarding effort and success. And make involvement in the LP an enjoyable, positive experience.

**We need to add a dose of “realism” to the party.** LP members must understand that there is no one, breakthrough strategy that will miraculously catapult us to success. Political success takes hard work.

But hard work doesn't need to be dreary work. We want a party that is fun, optimistic, friendly – and that rewards Libertarians who actually do the work. In other words, a party that is appealing to old and new members alike.



## And there you have it: The 20 strategies.

When we successfully implement these strategies, there is no doubt in my mind that we will become the dominant third party in America.

But the fact is, we don't have the resources – either volunteers or money – to fully implement every strategy right away.

**We must establish priorities.** That's why your input is so critical.

I'm sure you understand: There is a lot more to the Strategic Plan than I can present in this short letter. And there is much more we must do.

At the national office, we're developing "action plans" to achieve the goals and implement the strategies at the national level. We're encouraging our state affiliates to do the same.

**But this Strategic Plan has two big question marks:**

- \* How many Libertarians will volunteer to help?
- \* Can we raise the money needed to implement it?

## It comes down to you.

Will you volunteer some time to help make us the dominant third party in America?

And will you make a generous contribution to implement our Strategic Plan?

**Here's what your contribution can accomplish:**

- \* **\$1,000** will begin the "**Libertarian Brand**" strategy, by paying for one market-research question. That will help us discover which Libertarian message resonates best with voters. (Imagine how that will help our candidates in 2002!)
- \* **\$500** will help fund the "**Recruitment**" or "**Campus**" strategy. It could pay for 1,400 membership recruitment letters, or provide Operation Politically Homeless booths and literature to five campus Libertarian groups. (Take that, Green Party!)
- \* **\$250** will nourish the "**Training**" strategy. It will enable one State Chair to attend a leadership retreat – and return to his or her state bursting with ideas.
- \* **\$100** will help implement the "**Campaigns**" strategy. It will help us recruit more candidates for local office – where Libertarians are most likely to get elected.
- \* **\$50** will help finance the "**Internal Education**" strategy – and pay for copies of Libertarianism in One Lesson for 15 new LP members.

**Remember, your best contribution is your vote of support for whichever strategies you**

**consider most important.** No matter which strategies or goals you like best, your financial support can make them happen – sooner rather than later. More rather than less.

**Please:** Take a few minutes.

On the response form, prioritize the six goals and check the strategies you think are most important. There's also a place for you to include your comments.

And let us know what you are willing to contribute – in time and money – to help make it happen.

Without your support, this strategic plan is just words on paper.

**With your support, it can start to change the nation.**

**I hope that you're as optimistic about our future as I am.** And I hope you'll do what you can to translate this Strategic Plan into greater Libertarian success.

**I'll say it again:** We can do better.

It starts with your response – and contribution – today. Thank you!

Sincerely,



Steve Dasbach

National Director

**PS:** What's the "secret" to greater Libertarian Party success? Young people? More members? Market research? Improving the party's culture? Ending the Drug War?

**Whatever idea you like best, it's probably included in the Strategic Plan.** The plan features tried-and-true tactics from the past, and exciting new strategies for the future.

Your feedback will tell us what to work on first. And your generous contribution will allow us to start implementing the Strategic Plan immediately!

**PPS:** You know what you think about the Strategic Plan . . . but what do other party members think?

If you contribute \$35 or more, we'll send you the complete Strategic Plan Survey Report – based on the response to this letter – that we will be preparing for the LNC. You'll find out how other LP members prioritized the goals. Which strategies got the most votes. And you'll read frank comments from other LP members. It's our way of thanking you for your generosity!