

Liberty for America

Journal of the
Libertarian Political Movement

New Path Officer Slate at
the LSLA Meeting
(left to right: Power, Marbry,
Phillies, Oaksun)



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LNC Regional Organization

The LNC has started circulating a form allowing state parties to organize into regions.

State Chairs: Take Heed!

If your region has agreed as to which states are in the region, and who your regional representative will be, be sure that information is written on your form. If you want your delegates to vote at the National Convention on who your regional representative can be, be absolutely certain the "Regional Representative" space is marked "to be elected by vote of all delegates at the National Convention" or whatever you and your fellow state chairs have agreed to. Don't leave the space blank.

Be sure that no accidental misunderstanding mars our National Convention or the selection of the next Libertarian National Committee.

LNC Kills Floor Fees for Delegates

On a 10-5 vote, the LNC has killed floor fees for participation in the National Convention business meeting. Voting against killing floor fees were Starr, Sink-Burris, Lieberman, Mattson, and Sullentrup. Voting for killing floor fees were Ruwart, Flood, Ryan, Fox, Karlan, Wrights, Lark, Hawkridge, Dixon, and Jingoizian.

Solutions for the Libertarian Party

..James Oaksun

1. Zero Based Budget

We need to decide immediately which objectives are most important, and determine the most cost effective way to achieve them. We're not doing that right now.



We need change. We need to start with a clean sheet of paper – from Zero – and build back up.

We're currently doing too much of some things, not enough of other things, and spending too much money on things of question-

able value. We can fix our finances, but only if we make significant changes.

The first thing I will do when I am elected, is set up shop in the Party's headquarters for a time, at my own expense. I'll meet with the staff and critical vendors, re-

view all relevant contracts and documents, and stay until I fully understand what is happening at ground level, line item by line item.

2. Vision 2016 for the LP

Nobody wants to be involved or give money, just to pay overhead. People want results and we have to deliver them. The current leadership is not delivering results. We need change.

We need to decide where we want to go, and how we'll get there... and start taking immediate concrete steps to execute.

3. Reduce member attrition; increase new membership

Our membership is in long term decline. We're losing old members faster than we are winning new ones. We need change to stop this. Our new leadership team will inspire confidence, and as a result we will see lower lapse rates and increases in new members joining us.

4. Improved custodianship of member contributions

Buying a lifetime membership is not a loan. It is a trust – a trust that we will be here for a long time, and that the funds will be well managed. When I become treasurer, all lifetime membership funds going forward will be managed in a separate account, and brought into income on a periodic basis.

5. No floor fees for conventions

Dues paying members who are elected delegates, should not have to pay additional funds for their service. There should be no floor fees for 2010, 2012 or any year!

More Solutions for the Libertarian Party

...Scott Williamson

Control Fixed Costs

Our party coffers are getting smaller and smaller as our sustaining members and frequent donors continue to dwindle. Just like every family has to adjust their budget when their income decreases so does our party. I will ask our treasurer to work with our executive director and look at our fixed cost. Going through each and every fixed cost and examining what needs each item meets. Then I will

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Scott Williamson

take this information to you, the party faithful, and find out what you need out of each of these items. After we discover what needs we must meet we can explore the least expensive way of reaching our goals.

For example, our national office cost upwards of \$11,000 a month. We need to meet the needs of our executive director, office staff, and party members.

We want them to be able to do the work of our party, but we want the work to be done in the most cost effective manner. I would suggest gathering information from all our members and see what is most needed in an office. Do we need an office front? What type of parking do we need? Does the office need to be in Washington, D.C.? How important is it for the office to be located near an airport? How much square footage do we need? Etc. Then I will ask you and the executive director to prioritize each need and together we can locate the most cost effective office to meet our top priorities.

While talking to State Chairs over the last few months I

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Liberty for America will be performing political acts, like supporting voter registration, lining up volunteers, and other activities that the Federal government calls "Federal Election Activity" and hence FEC-reportable. We must therefore funnel dues to our PAC, "Liberty for America". Dues will not be used to support candidates.

Required Federal Notices: 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. Federal law requires us to state 'your money may be used to support Federal candidates', but we promise that we won't do that with your dues.

have been told by a few that our data base is full of waste. You told me that you receive a data dump full of outdated contact information causing you to spend money on mailings to address that are no longer valid. While no data base is going to be perfect, I will ask the national committee to look into seeing if there is a better, more cost effective way of keeping more accurate data so our state parties are not losing money on mailings that are simply returned to them.

When we lower our fixed cost we can free up money to advertise, gain ballot access, support candidates, and grow our party.

Communication

The most important job of a Representative to our national committee is to listen to those they represent. As your Representative I will contact state party leaders and inform them of the upcoming issues that the committee will be addressing. I will listen to their thoughts and ideas and take their recommendations to the committee. I will be available to any party activist who wishes to speak to me. After listening to their needs I will work with other national committee members to find solutions to the problems. As your Representative, never again will our region have a blank report submitted to the national committee. Our region is doing great things I am proud of and I know reporting these activities will inspire other activist around our nation. By sharing successes and failures local activist can barrow ideas and adjust them to fit their local needs.

Cooperation

For far too long our national committee has spent too much time and energy on witch hunts, obstructing minority voices, and arguing the finer points of parliamentary procedure. I will work with all those who you elect to our national committee and will fight for any committee member whose voice is being shut down. I will ask that the national committee issue a moratorium on the use of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised and suggest the committee explore other options of running a meeting so that order is kept, but all voices are heard.

Fund Raise

It takes money to raise money so we must have our fixed costs under control. When activist see that their money is being spent wisely they will be more likely to donate more. As sustaining membership rises so will our parties income. We can not survive simply on membership dues. We will have to continue to raise more money. We can not ask for money from our members with the promise of spending it on one thing and then spend it on another. During the last year our national web page had a plea for

donations on the top and center of our web page that stated, help us elect candidates in 2009. It worked well and the party exceeded its stated fund raising goal. However our FEC filing shows a total expenditure on candidates as zero. (click here to see the FEC report line 23) This was pointed out to me by several activist who had donated and felt disappointed that none of their money went to candidate support.

Dr. Paul has shown us that a lot of money can be raised \$10 at a time. While large contributions are nice, a large number of smaller contributions are better. People who donate small amounts once are more likely to give again and again. They are more likely to believe the money is being spent wisely, and are more likely to donate something even more valuable than their money, their time.

I am not promising millions and millions to be raised. This would be foolhardy. I am promising that I will work with you and the national committee to put us on the path of financial increase and stop the downward trend our parties donations have taken. I do not have all the solutions, and that is why listening is so important. Our party is comprised of thousands of talented, unique, and creative individuals. I will listen to your suggesting and ideas for increasing our party donations and take them to the national committee.

Strengthen State Parties

Our party will only see sustained growth when we grow our party from the bottom up. We may see a spike in membership during presidential election years, but as the excitement of the election wears off many of these members drop out. When we strengthen our state affiliates we strengthen the whole party.

While talking to the state chairs from our region, I was amazed at how some of our state parties memberships are dwindling. As your representative I will listen to the issues that face your state. Some of these issues can be addressed by the national committee which can provide states affiliates with better database information and activist and leadership training.

I will facilitate communication between party leaders in our region. While what works in one state may not work in another, creative people can adapt many ideas from other states and avoid mistakes made by others.

Support Activists and Candidates

Activists and candidates are the ones who do the heavy lifting for our party. Without activist spreading the mes-

sage and candidates running for office we would be a club not a political party. Activist and candidates help grow our party from the bottom up. The national party should never stifle the creativity of these individuals but can help them in their work. As your Representative I will listen to activist and candidates and find out what our national committee can do to support them.

Our party can have free, printable issue brochures available to those who wish to download them and use them in their activism. Our party can also use the vast amount of talent of our members and host training sessions and webinars for the newest of our members who have been brought into the party through our outreach.

With lower fixed cost more money should go to our candidates. Besides financial support our national party can offer web page templates, web page hosting, and candidate training.

Advertise

To depend solely on major media to spread the message of libertarianism and expand name recognition of the Libertarian Party is foolhardy. The major media outlets simply will not cover us. To spread our message we need to tap into the vast individual talents that already exist in our party and produce professional radio, T.V., and print ads. These advertisements should be made available to our state affiliates who can best determine how and where to use them in their area.

Before we can consider making this expenditure we must first control our fixed cost and increase our donation. (see above)

Outreach

End the Fed, Anti-War, and Tax Revolt rallies are springing up all over the place. Each day more and more people are waking up to the libertarian idea of self-government. We have been handed an opportunity like never before to grow our party.

Our party will grow from the bottom up. Our national committee should support the state and local activist who are reaching out into the gaping void left by the other political parties who have moved to the extreme ends of their party.

The best way our national committee can assist the local activist is by listening to them providing training, and providing free downloadable brochures.

Prepare for Convention

One of the few requirements our bylaws place upon our national committee is to have our convention. The cost of convention is approximately 1% of our national parties two year budgets. It is reasonable that our national committee set aside 1% of our income over two years to pay for convention. With this money already budgeted as an expense all the money made at convention will be profit. This will allow us to have no floor fee for delegates and prevent us from violating our own bylaws. It is reasonable to charge for convention activities such as meals, speakers, workshops, etc. It is unreasonable to charge a fee for a delegate to have access to the delegate floor in order to vote.

Floor FREE! But we're not through yet

by Carolyn Marbry



Many of us wrote resolutions and campaigned very hard to bring the required floor fee issue to the attention of the states and their delegates and to get people to speak out against it. Many of us argued passionately against the convention floor fee online and in person. A few of us wrote resolutions and presented them to our state conventions and executive committees in

an effort to let the states make their opinions known on the subject. Ultimately, that effort was rewarded. In Austin on Sunday morning, after considering the careful arguments on both sides of the floor fee issue, the LNC voted overwhelmingly NOT to require a floor fee of delegates to be on the convention floor and vote on party business.

This was a huge victory for the state parties, who retain the exclusive right to choose their delegates without those delegates having to pay what amounts to a poll tax. It was a huge victory for the delegates themselves, who will now have the responsibility of deciding for once and all whether or not to allow National to charge floor fees for voting at conventions in the future. It was a huge victory for Libertarianism because it put responsibility for this question in the hands of those directly affected by it: The delegates themselves. So I offer my thanks to the members of the LNC who voted to strike the floor fee and

leave it to the delegates to decide, whether that vote came from their own consciences or at the behest of their regions.

Meanwhile, the by-laws committee approved an amendment to the by-laws to be presented to the delegates to DISALLOW floor fees completely, a decision that led one LNC representative to call the committee “irrational.” The by-laws committee at the same time did not approve the amendment that would have allowed floor fees. This is also a victory for those who want to maximize participation.

Even so, in spite of these victories, we can't sit back and breathe a sigh of relief, not until this issue is resolved for once and all in the by-laws. Here's why. The central argument from those who want floor fees boils down to TANSTAAFL — There Ain't No Such Thing As A Free Lunch, taken from Robert Heinlein's masterpiece, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. They argue that conventions cost money and those costs must be paid by someone. They further argue that the by-laws don't explicitly prohibit National from charging a “registration fee,” so they are allowed to do so under Roberts Rules of Order, which refers to a registration fee that is “normally” paid for meetings.

Registration fees for meetings are acceptable to most Libertarians. No one has ever disputed that. Floor fees and poll taxes, however, are not, and that's really what this comes down to. As long as a registration fee is not required of a delegate in order for him or her to perform the duties for which s/he was elected by the states, it's not a problem. A registration fee to pay for badges with ribbons and binders, for example, would not be odious to anyone, and anyone who did not want to pay for such things would not have to and could still vote. But this floor fee *would have been* a problem as implemented because it would have locked delegates out of voting if they did not pay.

Another problem with a floor fee is that it acts just like a tax. Not only is it virtually impossible to get rid of once in place because the organization that collects it comes to depend on it, but it has a tendency to go up. Maybe \$100 is not that much and won't exclude that many people from attending. But what about \$1000, or \$10,000? Once the floor fee is in place, it's no longer a matter of “whether or not” but of “how much,” and it can become a tool for great harm within the party.

The pro-fee folks didn't ask the states if the states thought it was okay to add this extra requirement onto their delegates after 39 years' precedent of not having such a re-

quirement. Several states passed resolutions making their positions clear on this point: NO. The pro-fee folks didn't ask the delegates, either. Actually, strictly speaking, they have asked in the past, and the answer in every instance was no. I imagine it will be the same this time around.

Instead, curiously, they asked their parliamentarian. They even asked for a ruling from the current "Robert," of Roberts Rules of Order. The parliamentarian supported their letter-of-the-law interpretation, as did "the Robert." Wow, that sounds really authoritative. I imagine to a statist, that would be game, set and match. I see two problems with this. One, for all the leading questions they DID ask, they failed to ask the underlying question, the REAL question, which is: Is it the intention of our by-laws and RONR that the states' appointed delegates can be excluded from voting on National party business if said delegates do not pay a registration fee? Why in the world would we want to exclude any delegates from voting? Again, this is how a floor fee can cause great harm to the party.

At the end of the day, it doesn't really matter what the parliamentarians tell us RONR says on this since this is really a by-laws issue, and the by-laws give the power to the states to choose delegates. What does matter is that the answer in our by-laws right now is apparently not clear enough to keep this from coming up again and again. As long as any ambiguity remains in the by-laws, this question will keep popping up, and we'll keep having to play Whack-a-Mole with it. We need to act decisively and put this one to bed for once and all.

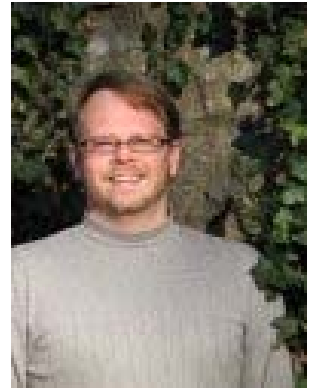
That's why I say we're not through yet. We need to reward those LNC members who voted to give this decision back to the delegates. We need to go to St. Louis, one and all, ideally with full delegations from every state. We need to support the convention in good faith and support our party in good faith. But mostly we need to represent our states and vote to protect their interests in the party. We need to shut the idea of floor fees down permanently.

As interesting as the questions of profit or loss at the last convention, of freeloading on the part of either the delegates or the LNC, or of where the budget went or should have gone to pay for the convention are, this really comes down to one thing: Is it right to turn away the states' chosen delegates from voting at national if they don't pay a "registration fee?" My sense of it is that it is not. And I'm going to St. Louis.

We Already Know the Solution

by Scott Williamson

Take a look at our Party's web page. At the top, like a bright marquee, we proudly announce our philosophy to all those who visit our site. It is simple. It is easy to remember. It is easy to understand. Smaller government. More freedom. We believe that when you give individuals liberty and responsibility for their own life the world is a safer and freer place to live. The best way to prove our philosophy works is when we use it and show it works.



As we get closer to our National Convention many of the liberty blogs are filled with debate and ideas for the growth of our party. While it is healthy and productive for a party to examine its direction, the solution to our problems is really as simple as our philosophy. Because the solution to the problems our party faces is our philosophy. Smaller government. More freedom.

How do we solve the problem of a shrinking membership? Smaller government. More freedom. Our national party will grow when the local party's grow. The best way to encourage local growth is for our national party to provide the tools (brochures, advertisement, etc) and then get out of the way. Our national party should serve the state and local parties, not the other way around.

How do we generate excitement and host great conventions while preventing fractional arguments and petty infighting? Smaller government. More freedom. More freedom allows minority voices to be heard. More freedom respects individual thoughts and expressions. Less government prevents the misuses of parliamentary procedures, which do nothing but discourage participation and attendance to our convention.

How do we solve the problem of dwindling donations? Smaller government. More freedom. Our party's money will go further when we are spending less on our fixed costs. It seems unreasonable to pay more for rent of office space to run the governance of our Party than we put into tooling our state affiliates, local activist, and candidates.

Libertarian principles of small government and more freedom are the solution to the problems that face our cities, states and our country. Those same principles apply to

the workings of our own Party, which will grow and succeed as soon as we can show that our principled actions match our words.

Scott Williamson is a candidate for Regional Representative to the LNC. Williamson can be contacted at scott.williamson01@comcast.net

What My Friends and I Did for Massachusetts Libertarians

by George Phillis

How LAMA has changed since the 2006 State Convention - and all for the better.

In 2006, the Libertarian Association of Massachusetts was in sufficient straits that its regular yearly convention, which should have been called for April, did not occur. The State Committee had not met for three-quarters of a year. Finally, in May the outbound State Chair to his great credit asked Carol McMahon and I to organize and hold the next State Convention, which due to Bylaws constraints could be held no earlier than September.



We held the Convention, an almost entirely new State Committee being elected. Carol and I were re-elected.

There then followed a prolonged period of trying to sort out all sorts of issues. Many of these took quite some time to fix, in some cases much longer than you would think necessary.

There are some useful lessons here. In an all-volunteer organization, sometimes you can replace your procedures. Sometimes you have to replace the people instead. Fixing a group will not happen overnight. However, it can be done. You do need a few things. You need people willing to do work. You need to be fairly vigorous about not listening to the voices who say 'we can't'.

Money: In 2006, one could note that there had been no fundraising drives since mid-2002. The State Party was substantially dependent on Unified Membership Plan income, meaning internal fundraising had atrophied and member feedback via the purse largely vanished. UMP money ran out in late 2006. The last monthly donor had stopped giving. Under new leadership, regular fund rais-

ing efforts were instituted. You can see that in our FEC reports, which show almost no income in the first half of 2007 and ramp up thereafter. Several unused objects having significant monthly costs and no benefits were terminated.

In January 2009, we had \$3150 in the Federal Campaign account; we now have \$4950, a 50% increase. When I became Treasurer in October 2008, we had \$128 in State Campaign funds; we now have \$3450. Our funds on hand have increased 2.5 times. If the national party were doing as well, given the USA has more people than Massachusetts, it would have \$360,000 cash on hand. More important, income is consistently increasing. *LAMA income rose 50% from 2007 to 2008, and a further 21% from 2008 to 2009. That's right, our income went up from election year to the next year.*

Membership: The new State Committee inherited a large number of people who had via the LNC paid state party dues, but who had never received anything for their money. We gave them all an automatic year forwards membership; that appeared to be the ethical solution. We also had other groups of people who were on the membership rolls, were apparently not Life Members (in some cases, we could ask directly), and who had not paid us anything in years. Disentangling all this in ways that would not lead to anyone claiming we had cheated them took some time.

In addition, membership rules needed to be brought into the 21st century. In 2006 there were no provisions for electronic memberships (newsletter via PDF), family memberships, or donation or renewal via the web. There were no monthly donors. There were no meet up groups. Under the new committee all these things were added; about a third of our members now receive Mass Liberty electronically. We also greatly upgraded our renewal letters.

However, in late 2006, we had a very small number of real members, and a very large number of people with no attachment to the organization whose entirely nominal memberships had to be run out. The process took until Summer 2009, when the last nominal memberships expired and membership bottomed. Since then, LAMA membership has gone up 75%.

Newsletter: In 2006 the newsletter had not come out regularly in years. We immediately resumed monthly publication, first under my editorship and then under the Editorships of David Blau and later Steve Greffenius. There was a major effort to cut costs and improve results.

The cost of printing and mailing the newsletter was cut 60%; we also went from black and white to color. With a couple of one-month drop-outs, mailing has continued monthly ever since.

Volunteer contact: In 2006, there was no volunteer contact effort. A program of contacting volunteers was instituted, first with a volunteer newsletter and now with telephone and email messaging. From 2008 to 2010, the number of Libertarian candidates, most running under the "Liberty" banner because of our weird ballot access issues, appears likely to be up substantially.

Web pages: In 2006, the web site had not been updated in a very long time. The former State Committee had not secured ownership of its own URL; the former webmaster, Muni Savyon, refused to turn the URL over to the new State Committee, and he is *still* refusing to do so. We registered alternative URLs, and - thanks to the hard work of first Bill Hees, then Mary-Anne Wolf, Bob Underwood, and soon Joe Kennedy - got a web site up. I was able to recover the old committee minutes and newsletter issues; you can see them on the new, improved web site. Bill Hees even managed to get a forwarder placed from the old LPMA.org address.

Art Torrey attached a forum device. More recently, we installed a SoapBlox object GoldMassGroup.com, which is closing on 600 readers.

Before 2006, we were in a perpetual downward spiral. Since 2006 when my good friends took over LAMA activities. It took a while to turn the ship around, but we did that, and we are now in a pattern of growth and expansion: Membership up 75% from its bottom. Donations that increased from 2008 to 2009. A regular newsletter. A web page that still has a ways to go, but is far better than it had been. More and more campaigns, some attracting National attention.

The Libertarian National Committee: Who's with whom? Who's against whom?

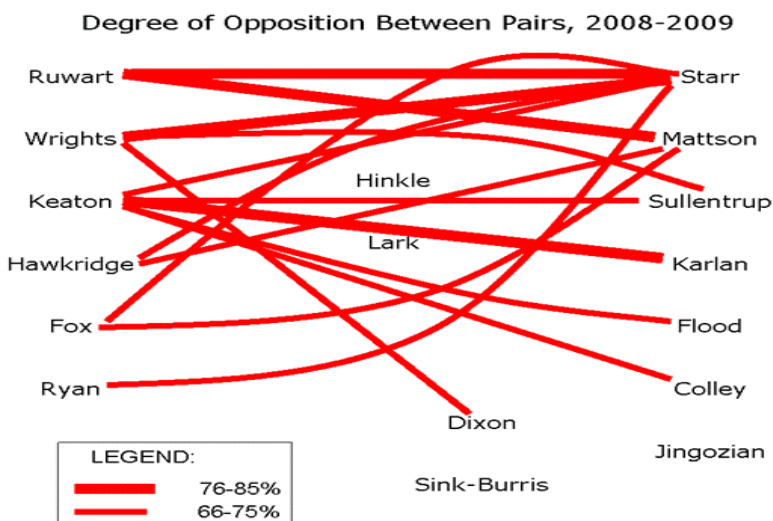
by James R. Oaksun

February 26 to 28 a Libertarian Party state leaders conference was held in Austin, Texas. Libertarian activists from across the country got together, shared ideas, and networked. On Saturday night, there was a debate among the five declared candidates for LNC Chair. Sunday, the National Committee had a regular meeting.

(Some subtle (and perhaps not-so-subtle) campaigning for other LNC positions will also take place, in all likelihood.)

In preparation for the conference and to help me and perhaps others sort out the current situation on the committee, I have analyzed all the LNC's recorded votes since the Denver convention. The end result of the analysis is a

Tired of the Pie Fight Yet?



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Yes, those percentages are % voted on opposite sides of the issues

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schematic that illustrates the coalitions on the committee - who is with whom, and who is against whom.

The source for the analysis is the posted minutes of the LNC meetings, from the lp.org website. I was not present at the meetings and relied solely on the formal textual record.

In addition, I only included votes where there was a stated division - where I could determine who voted yes/no/present. The committee took several voice votes through the period, where the record simply indicated "measure passed" or "measure failed". I excluded those.

I include both mail votes and votes from the physical meeting.

Many of the votes seemed, at first glance, to be merely procedural - e.g., approval of the prior meeting's minutes. But appearances can deceive you. Considering all votes as part of a woven cloth, it is obvious what has been going on within the LNC the last 18 months.

The first step in the analysis was simply to look at who voted most often with the majority committee sentiment. Now, what of LNC Chair Bill Redpath? Customarily Bill does not vote, or votes "present". He will vote, however, to break ties. In addition, he cast a couple other critical votes in the period that clearly determine where he belongs in the schematic.

While interesting, an analysis of majority sentiment congruence does not tell the whole story. To determine what is actually going on, I conducted a pairs analysis. I considered how often each member of the committee voted with each other member of the committee, one by one. I ranked the pairs by their degree of congruence with each other. The five strongest pairs on the committee are:

- Starr with Mattson..... 100%
- Ruwart with Fox.....93%
- Ruwart with Wrights.... .92%
- Wright with Fox.....92%
- Colley with Mattson.....91%

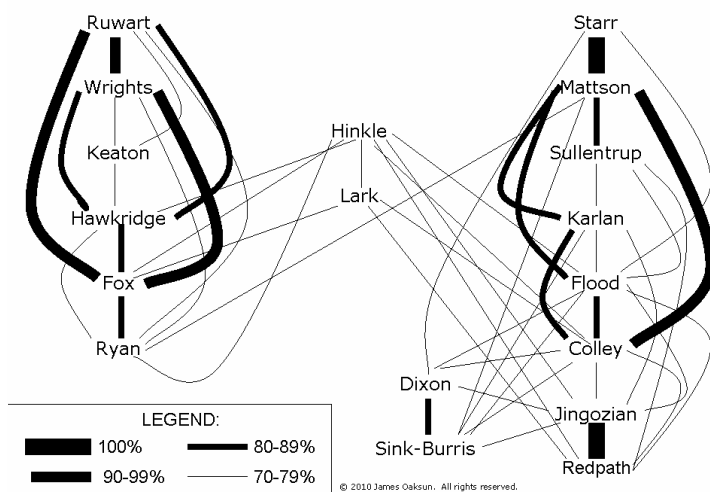
The five weakest pairs on the committee (i.e., the five that vote least often with each other) are:

- Starr with Wrights..... 16%
- Ruwart with Mattson.... .18%
- Keaton with Karlan.....20%
- Starr with Ruwart.....21%
- Starr with Hawkridge.... 25%

This produces the following diagram of connections. The

thickness of the line indicates the degree of congruence in the voting pattern.

Libertarian National Committee Voting Blocs, 2008-2009



That's % "vote the same way"

Clearly the right column dominates the left, although there are other dynamics that one must note.

The addition of Alicia Mattson clearly strengthened the hand of Starr, Sullentrup, Karlan, Flood and Colley. The departure of Angela Keaton from the committee, and her replacement by Mattson - a 100% reliable ally to Starr - was a huge victory for the Starr camp's cause.

While Dixon, Sink-Burris and Jingoizian are usual allies of the Starr camp, those three are not completely reliable to that camp. The addition of Mattson was a significant tip in the power structure.

As mentioned earlier, LNC Chair Bill Redpath - when push comes to shove - will ally with the right column, not the left.

The diagram also illustrates the importance to the Starr camp of attempting to remove Lee Wrights from the committee. This would have left Ruwart, Hawkridge, Fox and Ryan with only inconsistent support from Hinkle and Lark. If the Starr camp had succeeded in removing Wrights and replacing him with a new ally (presumably Carling), it would have given them a frequent two-thirds majority on the committee on most if not all issues (as Dixon, Sink-Burris, Jingoizian and even occasionally Redpath line up on their side typically). Under the Bylaws, two-thirds control is a significant benchmark and one that, presumably, the Starr camp would have used to their advantage.

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Liberty for America has a Federal PAC —we actually support
real Libertarians when they run for Federal office.

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Liberty for America
c/o George Phillies
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester MA 01609