



LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF OREGON

Dear Convention Delegate,

Please take a moment to read this important letter.

My name is Tim Reeves. I am the **legitimate** chairman of the Libertarian Party of Oregon under our duly adopted bylaws.

Tell me, how would you feel if a group of five LP members in your state:

- Ignored that your party bylaws only permit amendment by convention delegates,
- Voted as a majority of the State Committee to adopt entirely new bylaws they wrote themselves,
- Submitted the alleged new bylaws to the Secretary of State asserting them to be legitimately adopted,
- Cancelled a legitimately called convention session because their terms of office would have ended at the adjournment,
- Proclaimed themselves as elected to new terms of office,
- Disbanded your party's Judicial Committee, so that their decisions could not be appealed,
- Diluted your membership rights by counting as members people who never intended to join the party, while simultaneously refusing to recognize life members,
- Removed the requirement that members subscribe to our Statement of Principles?

That's EXACTLY what happened in Oregon. ^(Note 1)

On March 31, 2011 the Libertarian Party of Oregon State Committee, a group led by then state chair Wes Wagner, did *everything* listed above. They don't deny it. They're proud of it.

Mr. Wagner said they took this approach because he didn't think he could win enough support at a legitimate state convention to enact his desired changes.

Other members of the Oregon party refused to accept these edicts of the rogue state committee and attended the scheduled convention anyway. In the absence of a quorum, all we could do was adjourn to end the terms of the absent officers, creating vacancies. Fortunately, our bylaws empowered the remaining county representatives of the State Committee to fill officer vacancies, and that is how I came to be elected state party chairman^(Note 2).

Unfortunately, Oregon's Secretary of State recognizes the Wagner bylaws and Officers - for the moment. Why? Because Oregon's Secretary of State will only acknowledge that a party has new leadership or new bylaws if ordered to do so by the *outgoing state chair* (Wagner) or by a *judge*. **But Wagner refuses to acknowledge that he has been replaced. He also abused his status as the "Chair of Record" by submitting the bylaws written by himself and his supporters to the Secretary of State, purporting them to be legitimately adopted.**

Oregon's Secretary of State will not rule on the merits of the situation and will not involve itself in the LPOR's internal politics. **As a result, a group of LPOR members and I have been forced to file a lawsuit since a judge is the only other authority to whom the Secretary of State will yield.**
^(Note 3) The process is slow and Wagner's lawyers have been challenging us on various procedural grounds to cause delay and increase our legal expenses. It now appears we will have our day in court sometime in May and we can expect a resolution before fall.

But there's a bigger issue here. Mr. Wagner now seeks control of the entire Libertarian Party!

The people largely responsible for this naked power grab, along with their cohorts, want to do to the entire Libertarian Party what they did to us in Oregon.

Here is their slate of candidates. And they must be stopped.

Wes Wagner – Running for National Chair

Wes Wagner, the ringleader and former chairman who seized power and violated the rights of our members, is running for National Chair. He has argued with a straight face that Oregon state law allows him to rewrite the bylaws without a vote of convention delegates. Oregon law states no such thing. If Wes Wagner becomes National Chairman, what will he do when he doesn't get his way, and decides he doesn't want to be hindered by the antiquated limitations contained in the Libertarian Party's national Bylaws?

Jeff Weston – Running for National Secretary

Jeff Weston is the immediate past chair of the Libertarian Party of Oregon and has worked hand-in-hand with Wes Wagner. During Weston's term of office he removed all life members from the membership roll. Even after disenfranchised members appealed to the Oregon Judicial Committee, he still refused to recognize as members those who were his political opponents. He even issued an "emergency action" explaining that he refused to recognize some new members because he feared that they would not support his agenda. If Jeff Weston

becomes National Secretary, will he recognize your membership if he deems you don't support his agenda?

George Phillies – Running for National Treasurer

George Phillies of Massachusetts has provided aid and comfort to the Wagner crew. Some of you may recall that George Phillies was the one who filed an FEC criminal complaint against both the Libertarian National Committee and the 2008 Presidential campaign, even after he was provided information from an outside auditor that what he alleged never happened. After great expense to the party, the FEC dropped the matter. ^(Note 4) George Phillies has a history of acting as a bully ... and now he wants to control the Party's check book.

Mary Ruwart – Running for At Large Member, Libertarian National Committee

After the takeover by Wagner and crew, disenfranchised members of the LPO pled for help from the national party. Most of the National Committee has been supportive. **A super majority of the Libertarian National Committee recognize as legitimate the Reeves group and the bylaws they are operating under, which were approved by LPOR members in convention and legitimately amended during these past forty years.**

Unfortunately, one prominent member of the National Committee (and its Executive Committee) has actively assisted Mr. Wagner with his takeover ... Mary Ruwart.

Mary Ruwart promoted a bizarre legal theory that the National Committee's decision to recognize the legitimate officers of a state affiliate was equivalent to disaffiliating the state party and affiliating with a new one. She did this to shoehorn this matter into an issue that could be heard by the Libertarian Party's Judicial Committee.

Mary Ruwart presented the Wagner group's case in front of the Judicial Committee, where she actually argued – and I know this is hard to believe! – that only the Secretary of State is the rightful arbiter of who should be considered our legitimate affiliate and officers. Not our bylaws, but an elected Democrat or Republican! Why would someone known as a philosophical anarchist put forward such a notion? The answer is Lee Wrights.

R. Lee Wrights – Running for Libertarian Party Presidential Nomination

Lee Wrights currently serves on the Judicial Committee.

Mr. Wrights lives with Ms. Ruwart. And having no other visible means of support, Ms. Ruwart appears to be the sole provider of Mr. Wrights' standard of living. Under normal circumstances, personal relationships are no one else's business. But it is entirely inappropriate for Mr. Wrights to be serving on a body of appeal for decisions in which Ms. Ruwart is representing one of the parties to the case. I twice requested that Mr. Wrights recuse himself from this case, but he refused to do so.

Imagine if you were on trial. What justice would you expect to receive if the prosecuting attorney lived with the judge deciding your case?

Lee Wrights was the deciding vote in a 4-3 decision of the Judicial Committee that stated, "We find that the Libertarian Party of a particular state, in this case the State of Oregon, is the entity that is recognized by the Secretary of State, in this case, the State of Oregon."

In other words, the government should be the final arbiter of who your state party leaders are, not your members or even your party's bylaws. This is the stance that Lee Wrights has taken after his significant other, Mary Ruwart, submitted a brief to the Judicial Committee and then verbally advocated that exact same position during the Judicial Committee's hearing.

Ironically, the Secretary of State said that her office doesn't have the legal authority to decide this and we would need to go to court, if our own internal processes didn't resolve the matter.

The Judicial Committee is largely limited in its authority to overturning LNC decisions that contravene the bylaws. They do not have the authority to legislate from the bench. Their statement amounted to the crafting of a new rule not found in the national bylaws. The Judicial Committee clearly exceeded its authority and by doing so has created very large legal bills for both sides of this conflict.

And all this happened because Lee Wrights voted when he had no business doing so.

Besides the obvious conflict of interest from his relationship with Ms. Ruwart, Mr. Wrights has one more conflict of interest. He is seeking our party's nod for the 2012 Presidential nomination. Wrights, who cast a deciding vote for Wagner's side, refused to recuse himself - even though the hearing's outcome was likely to impact who could vote as delegates from Oregon at the presidential convention.

After the 4-3 decision, Wes Wagner and Jeff Weston made substantial contributions to Lee Wrights' campaign for president. If you don't believe it, you can look up the FEC data yourself. (Note 5)

The above slate of five shares a common set of values that are anathema to what you and I believe. They believe that the end justify the means.

That is not acceptable for the Party of Principle. We need to elect leaders who understand our principles, respect our bylaws and exercise good judgment.

Our party and movement depend on people like you committing their time, talent, and resources toward advancing our ideals and building our party.

Please do not support any of these five people for any position in the Libertarian Party.

I do have one last request:

"The Wagner group" has presented a slate of delegates to be seated in Las Vegas.

"The Reeves group" has also presented a slate of delegates to be seated in Las Vegas.

You may be asked to choose which delegation to seat - the one submitted by the Reeves group or the one submitted by the Wagner group.

Although the Judicial Committee may at times be able to overturn an LNC decision, you as a delegate get to make the final decision about who should be seated as convention delegates.

This ultimately isn't about who gets to be a delegate and who doesn't - there often are ways to seat everyone from a state who wants to be a delegate, and we're OK with that. **This is about whether or not we will signal to Libertarian activists across the county that bypassing party bylaws and instituting illegal coups is acceptable behavior.** As a political party, we aim to have our country act within the confines of the Constitution. Shouldn't we apply that standard to ourselves?

Your choice of which delegation to seat on behalf of Oregon is important. First, seating the Reeves delegation will send a message throughout our party that internal coups are unacceptable. Seating the Wagner delegation will send the opposite message, perhaps to some disgruntled members in your own state. Second, your choice could impact the Oregon court case that can restore legitimate governance to the LPOR. Finally, seating the Reeves delegation can rectify the actions taken by a presidential candidate and an LNC Executive Committee member who acted despite clear conflicts of interest.

Thank you for reading this letter. I am sorry that some of your time might be spent on this issue. And while regrettable, I am heartened and inspired by the many positive issues and opportunities this convention and election cycle will open up to us. **Despite our difficulties from time to time, and the hazards we occasionally face, I believe in the future of the Libertarian Party and look forward to working constructively with all of you as partners during the months and years ahead.**

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Tim Reeves, State Chair
Libertarian Party of Oregon

Citations:

¹ <http://marketliberal.org/LP/JudCom/2011Wagner/2011-07-28%20LNC%20brief.pdf>

² <http://marketliberal.org/LP/JudCom/2011Wagner/2011-07-28%20LNC%20brief%202.pdf>

³ See FEC.gov website and search for MUR 6209 for the dismissed complaint by George Phillies

⁴ <http://lpinscr.blogspot.com/2012/01/reeves-group-sues-wagner-group-on.html>

⁵ <http://fec-individuals.findthedata.org/l/1062584/Weston-Jeffrey> and
<http://fec-individuals.findthedata.org/l/1062583/Wagner-Wes>