



Sample Bylaws, from the Libertarian Party of West Michigan

Libertarian Party of West Michigan

"That government is best which governs least" -Thomas Jefferson

P.O. Box 3685 * Grand Rapids , Michigan

(As Amended in Convention, April 1, 2008)

Article 1 - Name

The name of this organization shall be the "Libertarian Party of West Michigan," hereinafter referred to as the LPWM.

Article 2 - Purpose

The purpose of the LPWM is to give voice to the Preamble and Statement of Principles of the national Libertarian Party Platform (see Appendix), in Kent County and in adjacent counties that have no active Libertarian Party organization, by nominating and supporting candidates for political office, initiating and/or supporting ballot proposals, lobbying elected officials, and engaging in educational and other informational activities to promote the libertarian perspective.

Article 3 - Members

Section 1: Anyone residing in Kent County or in any adjacent county that has no active Libertarian Party organization shall be eligible for membership in the LPWM.

Section 2: A member shall be in good standing whose dues are current and who has affirmed the following statement: "I hereby certify that I do not believe in or advocate the initiation of force as a means of achieving political or social goals."

Section 3: Membership dues shall be determined by the LPWM membership at the annual convention.

Article 4 - Legal Organization

Section 1: The LPWM shall be organized under the IRS Code as a Section 527 political organization.

Section 2: The LPWM shall be organized under Michigan election as a Political Party Committee.

Article 5 - Executive Committee

Section 1: The Executive Committee shall consist of the LPWM Officers and the chairs of all standing committees.

Section 2: A quorum of the Executive Committee shall consist of the presence of at least the Chair or the Vice Chair, and a majority of the remaining Executive Committee members. A majority vote of the Executive Committee members present at an Executive Committee meeting shall prevail except as



otherwise provided in these bylaws.

Section 3: The Executive Committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the LPWM between membership meetings. The Executive Committee shall be subject to the orders of the general membership, and none of its acts shall conflict with action taken by the general membership.

Section 4: No member may serve as more than one officer in any one term. A member may serve as an officer and/or as a chair of one or more standing committees, but she or he shall be limited to only one vote on the Executive Committee.

Section 5.1: If any Executive Committee members shall be absent from three consecutive Committee meetings, she or he shall be notified by either the chair or vice-chair that her or his position is in danger of being declared vacant. If the member is so notified and is subsequently absent from a fourth consecutive meeting, her or his position may be declared vacant as a majority vote of the Executive Committee may determine.

Section 5.2: A two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee may remove a member from any LPWM office or standing committee chair position for a violation of these bylaws or an Executive Committee resolution.

Section 6: The Executive Committee shall meet on such dates as it shall set. The dates, times, and places of the Executive Committee meetings shall be published in the LPWM newsletter and posted on the e-mail notification service available through the LPWM web site, except to such Executive Committee members who request to be notified through a different medium. Such notice shall be posted no less than 48 hours prior to the time of the meeting. An Executive committee meeting may be called by two members of the Executive Committee.

Section 7: All Executive Committee meetings may be attended by any LPWM member, and all substantive decisions made by the Executive Committee shall be reported in the LPWM newsletter.

Section 8: All information gathered and maintained by the LPWM shall be accessible to any member of any Libertarian Party organization, except for LPWM membership information which shall be accessible only to the Executive Committee members and shall be provided to others only by approval of the Executive Committee.

Article 6 - Officers

Section 1: LPWM officers shall be a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Board Advisor. LPWM officers shall be elected at the annual LPWM Convention and shall serve until the end of the next annual LPWM Convention. Only voting members of the LPWM shall be eligible for election as LPWM officers.

Section 1.1: The LPWM membership shall elect a LPWM member to fill any LPWM office which becomes vacant between annual LPWM Conventions, except that of the Chair which shall be filled by the Vice Chair. A special Convention must be held within 120 days of a vacancy if no Convention is scheduled



within this time. The Chair may appoint any current LPWM member to fill the vacant position, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee, until a Convention takes place.

Section 2: The Chair shall be the chief executive officer of the LPWM; shall preside at all Executive Committee meetings, general membership meetings, and LPWM conventions; shall speak for and manage the affairs of the LPWM in the absence of contrary directives by the Executive Committee or the LPWM general membership; may appoint members of standing committees; but all appointments must be approved by the Executive Committee; and shall be a member ex officio of all standing and project committees.

Section 3: The Vice Chair shall assist the Chair and shall assume the duties of the chair in the absence, disability, or resignation of the chair.

Section 4: The secretary shall be the recording officer of the Executive Committee, the general membership meetings, and the LPWM conventions; shall be responsible for the membership rolls of the LPWM; shall be responsible for mailing LPWM Introductory Packets to interested individuals who request information about the Libertarian Party, and shall maintain archival information of the LPWM. The Secretary is authorized to delegate these powers to a duly authorized committee.

Section 5: The Treasurer shall receive, record, and disburse all LPWM funds. Disbursements shall be at the direction of the Executive Committee except as otherwise indicated in these Bylaws.

Section 5.1: The treasurer may, with the approval of the Executive Committee, appoint or hire a person to be Designated Recordkeeper under Michigan election law. The Executive Committee shall fix the compensation, if any, of any person appointed or hired as Designated Recordkeeper. The Designated Recordkeeper has no vote on the Executive Committee unless she or he is also an officer or standing committee chair.

Section 6: If at an annual convention the current Chair chooses not to seek another term as Chair or any other office, she or he may remain on the Executive Committee in the position of Board Advisor, with the approval of the membership. If the current chair is not to be Board Advisor the position may be filled, with the approval of the membership, by any officer not seeking another term or position, in the order the offices appear in these bylaws. If no member qualifies, the membership may, at its discretion, retain the current Board Advisor, or leave the position unfilled.

Section 7: Only the Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer shall be authorized to sign checks for the LPWM.

Article 7 - Standing Committees

Section 1: Members of a standing committee may be appointed by the Executive Committee, by standing committee chair, or by the LPWM Chair. All appointments must be approved by the Executive Committee. Appointments shall be made only at a Convention or at an Executive Committee meeting. Only voting members of the LPWM shall be eligible for appointment as members of a standing committee. The Executive Committee may fix a maximum size to any standing committee. All

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appointments expire at the next annual Convention.

Section 2: All standing committee chairs shall be ex officio members of the Executive Committee, and shall report at Executive Committee meetings.

Section 3: Each standing committee may have only one member, that member being the chair of the standing committee. Each standing committee may elect other officers, and shall set its own rules.

Section 4: A standing committee with no members shall be declared suspended, and the Executive Committee may assign part or all of its areas of activity to other committees. The Executive Committee may assign additional areas of activity to any committee. Such assignments shall exist until the next annual Convention, and must be renewed at that time or shall expire.

Section 5: The standing committees of the LPWM shall be: Membership, Fund-Raising, Database, Newsletter, Media, Speakers, Discussion Group, Informational Outreach, and Campaign Coordination.

Section 5.1: The Membership Committee shall conduct appropriate activities and events, and coordinate volunteers to increase the membership of the LPWM.

Section 5.2: The Fund-Raising Committee shall conduct appropriate activities and events and coordinate volunteers to raise funds to support the activities of the LPWM. The Fund-Raising Committee shall inform the LPWM membership, through the LPWM newsletter or through specific membership mailings, of projects being conducted by the LPWM in connection with monetary solicitations so potential contributors will know what they are contributing to. Any donations that are earmarked for a specific project shall be used to support only that project.

Section 5.3: The Database Committee shall maintain the entire mailing list of the LPWM, updating membership information from the Secretary, media contact information from the Media Committee, inquirer information, and any other information deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee. The Database Committee shall print labels for mailings.

Section 5.4: The Newsletter Committee shall edit a newsletter concerning LPWM activities and information, and shall have this newsletter published and mailed to all LPWM members and to additional people and organizations as deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee. Frequency of distribution shall be determined by the Executive Committee.

Section 5.5: The Media Committee shall maintain a media contact list; have press releases copied and mailed; and shall follow up with media contacts after press release mailings.

Section 5.6: The Speakers Committee shall maintain a list of LP speakers to give talks to school students and other community organizations introducing them to the Libertarian Party and giving a Libertarian perspective on current issues; maintain a list of high schools and colleges in the Kent County region; send out mailings on a periodic basis offering Libertarian Party speakers to relevant school teachers and to other community organizations; and coordinate speakers to fulfill speaking requests.



Section 5.7: The Discussion Group Committee shall arrange discussion groups with new Libertarian Party members by arranging for locations and discussion group facilitators. This committee shall also arrange for speakers, discussions, presentations, and other activities as needed.

Section 5.8: The Informational Outreach Committee shall conduct appropriate activities and events to inform the public of Libertarian positions and philosophy. The committee shall maintain the LPWM supplies of literature and other materials used for outreach; manage the operation of informational tables at colleges and other events of its choosing; organize and conduct protests; and coordinate the solicitation and use of volunteers in its efforts.

Section 5.9: The Campaign Coordination Committee shall assist LP candidates in the Kent County region with information about filing requirements and about conducting campaigns.

Section 6: The establishing of these standing committees is not meant to preclude or discourage other LPWM members from leading their own projects in these areas of political activity. The establishing of these standing committees is intended to focus the efforts of the LPWM in a formal way, and to develop and maintain information, documentation, and experience that is useful to the LPWM membership at large for increasing the membership and political influence of the Libertarian Party of West Michigan.

Article 8 - Project Committees

Section 1: Project committees may be formed by (1) authorization of the LPWM through formal resolution at a convention or general membership meeting, (2) by the decision of the Executive Committee, or (3) by the LPWM Chair, with the approval of the Executive Committee. The duties of the project committee shall be defined at the time of formation.

Section 2: Appointment of project committee chairs and members shall follow the same rules as stated for standing committees.

Section 3: A project committee chair shall not have a vote on the Executive Committee unless she or he is also an LPWM officer or standing committee chair.

Article 9 - Conventions

Section 1: The LPWM shall hold an annual Convention each year prior to, but not more than three months before, the Michigan Libertarian Party convention, performing such business as required by these Bylaws.

Section 2: The LPWM shall hold a special Convention upon the decision of the Executive Committee.

Section 3: The LPWM membership shall be notified of the scheduled date of any Convention at least two weeks prior to the Convention.

Section 4: All members of the LPWM who attend and register at a LPWM convention or meeting shall be eligible to vote at the convention or meeting, except that a person who has never been a member of the



LPWM, the Libertarian Party of Michigan, or the national Libertarian Party must have become a member of the LPWM at least 90 days prior to a convention or meeting before being allowed to vote at that convention or meeting.

Section 5 : A majority shall rule at any convention or meeting except as otherwise indicated in these bylaws.

Section 6 : The Executive Committee shall have supervision and management of all conventions and meetings.

Section 7 : The LPWM membership, gathered in convention, shall nominate candidates for partisan political office in districts within Kent County by majority vote.

Article 10 - LPWM Nominations and Elections

Section 1: The LPWM shall not fund or advocate the election of a candidate of any other political party.

Section 2: "None Of The Above" shall automatically be an option for nomination to any political office and for election to any LPWM office.

Article 11 - Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the LPWM and the Executive Committee in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws and any special rules of order the LPWM or the Executive Committee may adopt.

Article 12 - Dissolution

If the Libertarian Party of West Michigan is terminated or dissolved, its remaining assets, if any, shall, as determined by the Executive Committee, be conveyed or distributed to, and only to, one of or any combination of the following organizations: Libertarian Party organizations in the state of Michigan, the national Libertarian Party, or libertarian-oriented organizations anywhere in the United States which are categorized as tax-exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

Article 13 - Amendment of Bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote at any annual or special LPWM Convention.

Appendix

(from the Libertarian Party Platform)

As Libertarians, we seek a world of liberty; a world in which all individuals are sovereign over their own lives, and no one is forced to sacrifice his or her values for the benefit of others.



We believe that respect for individual rights is the essential precondition for a free and prosperous world, that force and fraud must be banished from human relationships, and that only through freedom can peace and prosperity be realized.

Consequently, we defend each person's right to engage in any activity that is peaceful and honest, and welcome the diversity that freedom brings. The world we seek to build is one where individuals are free to follow their own dreams in their own ways, without interference from government or any authoritarian power.

In the following pages we have set forth our basic principles and enumerated various policy stands derived from those principles.

These specific policies are not our goal, however. Our goal is nothing more nor less than a world set free in our lifetime, and it is to this end that we take these stands.

Statement of Principles

We, the members of the Libertarian Party, challenge the cult of the omnipotent state and defend the rights of the individual.

We hold that all individuals have the right to exercise sole dominion over their own lives, and have the right to live in whatever manner they choose, so long as they do not forcibly interfere with the equal right of others to live in whatever manner they choose.

Governments throughout history have regularly operated on the opposite principle, that the State has the right to dispose of the lives of individuals and the fruits of their labor. Even within the United States, all political parties other than our own grant to government the right to regulate the lives of individuals and seize the fruits of their labor without their consent.

We, on the contrary, deny the right of any government to do these things, and hold that where governments exist, they must not violate the rights of any individual: namely, (1) the right to life — accordingly we support the prohibition of the initiation of physical force against others; (2) the right to liberty of speech and action — accordingly we oppose all attempts by government to abridge the freedom of speech and press, as well as government censorship in any form; and (3) the right to property — accordingly we oppose all government interference with private property, such as confiscation, nationalization, and eminent domain, and support the prohibition of robbery, trespass, fraud, and misrepresentation.

Since governments, when instituted, must not violate individual rights, we oppose all interference by government in the areas of voluntary and contractual relations among individuals. People should not be forced to sacrifice their lives and property for the benefit of others. They should be left free by government to deal with one another as free traders; and the resultant economic system, the only one compatible with the protection of individual rights, is the free market.