

LPC Candidates'

Signatures Gathering Strategy and Tactics

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Signature Gathering Planning and Strategy

Introduction

Gathering signatures to qualify for the ballot is your first big challenge. This document provides important information about what signature gathering involves and helpful ideas about how to do it.

See section 4 of *A Libertarian Candidate's Guide; Running for Office in California* (the Guide) for more detailed coverage of the formalities (laws, paperwork, forms, etc.).

Plan for Success

Developing a plan – even a very informal one – is usually quite helpful. The primary reason to plan *anything* is to increase the likelihood of success by (in no particular order): 1) setting priorities, 2) avoiding unhelpful expectations, 3) avoiding unnecessary hassle, 4) learning from others' mistakes and 5) using proven and most useful tactics.

So establishing a plan for gathering signatures – no matter how informal – is important before starting.

Note that the plan (document) is not nearly as important or valuable as the *planning* (activities). In simp0list terms; *planning* is the process used to: a) understand what is needed and b) develop a strategy to accommodate those needs.

The Plan

The plan is a record of the results from planning. A plan serves as a reference during plan execution. Plans are also used to communicate elements of your strategy to campaign volunteers and staff.

A simple one or two page plan document might include:

- a) timeline with deadlines and action items,
- b) list of tactics, possibly with brief descriptions,
- c) brief description of resource needs – people and materials – and how those needs will be met
- d) brief description of expected implementation challenges and possible solutions and/or helpful resources.

Finally; don't be a slave to the plan. Plans change. They are often partially stale before they are implemented. Situations and knowledge change. So as the adage goes: "plan for the expected, but expect the unexpected."

Plan Execution

Important elements of your signature gathering plan execution include:

- ✓ Start early.

- ✓ Keep it simple.
- ✓ Prepare.
- ✓ Avoid expectations.
- ✓ Be flexible.
- ✓ Know the rules and keep track of deadlines.
- ✓ Learn from others' mistakes and success.
- ✓ Ask for help.
- ✓ Maintain good relations with ROV.
- ✓ Coordinate with local LP organization(s) and candidates.
- ✓ Address other campaign objectives.
- ✓ Develop a *brief* characterization of your priorities.
- ✓ Represent our party.
- ✓ Have Fun!

Start Early

Be ready to start the official process of qualifying for the ballot as soon as possible. For the June 2008 Primary the signature gathering period is December 28, 2007 to February 21, 2008.

Keep it Simple

Go out of your way to keep the process as simple as possible. Beware: setting up sophisticated databases, mapping schemes, communications programs, direct mail schemes, etc. usually lead to benefits that are not nearly as great as expected.

Avoid Expectations

Many candidates end up disappointed unnecessarily. One way to avoid that disappointment is to avoid expectations. Gathering signatures is no different.

For example; if you expect to gather twenty signatures during one day and you only get three then ideally— rather than feel disappointment – you can focus on ways to be more successful next time (i.e.; how to get five, or eight, or ten...).

Be Flexible

This document started off with a discussion of planning. Plans are great but circumstances change and plans usually do not account for many possibilities. So use a plan as a guide but be flexible. If the guide takes you over a cliff...do not follow the guide, modify it.

Know the Rules and Keep Track of Deadlines

Presumably this goes without saying but it is helpful to know the rules (see section 4 of the Guide) before starting.

And, candidates should review deadlines periodically. Ideally deadline dates are in the candidates' electronic calendar (e.g. Blackberry, iPhone, or Outlook).

Learn from Others' Mistakes and Success

There have been hundreds of LP candidates over the years that have gone through the signature gathering process. Hopefully this is obvious, but; you should tap into the knowledge of others who have gone through the process.

First, as the saying goes, "you don't know what you do not know." One way to find out what you don't know is to ask those with experience.

Second, another important adage — as characterized by Admiral Hyman Rickover — is: "learn from others' mistakes because you don't live long enough to make them all yourself."

Ask for Help

Some candidates can feel overwhelmed and/or feel like she needs advice or support. The only solution is to ask for help. You are urged to ask for: logistical support, help to develop or refine ideas, opinions about a tactic or approach you have in mind, etc. In most cases you'll get some input. If not, be persistent. Sometimes you have to ask two or three times.

Also, try to contact LP previous candidates that ran in your district or an overlapping one. (Ted Brown may have this information for you.) Ask them about names of people that signed petitions in previous elections and about any other advice s/he may have.

Also, do not hesitate to ask the local registrar of voters (ROV) for assistance. Of course there is no guarantee that you'll get satisfaction but in most cases they are helpful.

Maintain Good Relations with the Registrar of Voters

As ultra-small government advocates we libertarians tend to let our disdain for government get in the way of our success. You are urged to avoid that problem by going out of your way to establish and maintain good relations with the ROV.

Consider that the people working in the ROVs office are likely to have a somewhat unchallenging, unfulfilling, unappreciated bureaucracy job so a pleasant greeting and a thank you often goes a long way.

If nothing else other party members also interact with the ROV and maintaining a good reputation for our party is important. And, you may need to have them assist if you have glitches related to ballot status or paperwork.

Coordinate with Local LP Organization(s) and Candidates

Coordinate with Local Party(ies) for support and to get leverage from party communications (e.g. newsletters and other mailings) and activities (e.g., outreach events). If your district includes areas from more than one county you'll have to coordinate with the LP party organization in each county.

Among other possibilities, the local party chair person can assist by putting you into contact with 1) active people in your area that might help you, 2) a person who manages the membership list and possibly email lists in your county and 3) the person managing the local party newsletter.

Coordinate with Other Candidates

Coordinate with other candidates; especially those whose district is adjacent to or that overlaps with the district for the office that you are running for. Do this as soon as you know that you will be a candidate.

Ask for advice from members that are former candidates. Ideally you can contact persons that ran in the previous election, to get the names of people who signed an In Lieu Petition.

Address Other Campaign Objectives

Many candidates don't think much about the actual campaign until after the signature gathering is completed. Nonetheless; signature gathering may be first and possibly the most extensive opportunity to reach out to people.

At a minimum you should be prepared to suggest opportunities for people to get involved with or to contribute to your campaign. Ideally, you would include suggestions about ways for people to get involved with the LP.

The following is a starting point for such a list. (See also the discussion about developing a menu of ways for people to participate and to contribute, in the Background and Preparation section, above.)

- become a volunteer or officer for your campaign
- make a campaign contribution
- become a Libertarian Party member
- register other Libertarian Party voters

Develop a *Brief* Characterization of your Priorities

When gathering signatures some prospective signers want to know about your priorities and positions. Be prepared to spend no more than one minute highlighting your key priorities and the related solution or policy.

If you cannot summarize your priorities in one minute then keep honing your message. If a signer wants more detail s/he will ask. Normally signers are

just glad that *someone* is running. And most signers prefer to sign your petition and move on rather than chatting much about politics.

Unless the other person brings up your opponent; it is best to remain focused on *your* positions and solutions.

Represent our Party

In most cases; the only contact most libertarians have with our party is with our candidates. Hopefully you'll be mindful of that fact and do your part to provide the good face that we need for our party.

Have Fun!

Having fun may be the most important facet of your plan. If you don't have fun and enjoy the experience then you won't have the full enthusiasm needed to be a successful candidate and to make the campaign worthwhile.

Background and Preparation

This section provides key background information and summarizes helpful suggestions and important lessons learned about what to do and what to not do to gather signatures successfully.

Nominating Signatures versus Signatures In Lieu

Nominating Signatures are signatures required for you to be nominated as a candidate for the Libertarian Party. For example, candidates for U.S. House must gather 40 nominating signatures.

Signatures In Lieu (or *Signatures In Lieu of Filing Fees*) are required to offset filing fees. Each signature offsets a portion of the filing fees so each valid signature collected reduces filing fees. If the required number of signatures in lieu is gathered then you pay no filing fees.

Practically, the distinction is usually not important because nominating signatures may also be used as signatures in lieu. However, technically; signatures in lieu only apply toward the nominating signature requirements if the candidate asks that they apply. So be sure to ask your ROV to do so.

Who May Sign your Petition

Valid signatures are from people who: 1) are eligible to vote for the candidate. So, signers must be registered to vote in the candidate's political party and in the candidate's district. Also, signers may not sign a petition for any other candidate for the same office.

Note that candidates have an opportunity to replace invalid signatures during a brief period just after the end of the normal signature gathering period. In effect; that gives you a bit more time to gather *valid* signatures. (To be clear: you may only replace invalid signatures that you submitted during the normal signature gathering period).

Registered Voters versus LP Members

Perhaps it goes without saying but there is a difference between *registered voters* that are affiliated with the Libertarian Party and *Libertarian Party members*; though they *do* overlap.

Who May Circulate your Petition

Signatures may be gathered on a candidate's behalf by people who are eligible to vote for the candidate. So, circulators must be registered to vote in the candidate's district and must be registered to vote in the candidate's political party.

Circulators must fill out the portion of the signatures in lieu form called the Affidavit of Circulator. It must be completed by the circulator.

This is important! Without this information signatures will not be counted.

Note also that if you or another circulator is not present when someone signs your signatures in lieu form then the signer must also be the circulator. For example, if you send a signatures in lieu form to someone by mail or electronically then s/he must sign and fill out the Affidavit of Circulator portion of the form.

Coordinate with your County Party(ies)

One of the first contacts to make is with officers of your local party organization. Depending on how many active members the county party has (if any) you might get various types of support ranging from encouragement to organized mailings, fundraising and events that support your candidacy.

If nothing else the local county party chair should be able to help you get a list of party members in your district, and possibly other contacts and email lists of people that can sign your petition or support your campaign.

And, there may be mailings to members that you can use to notify people about your need for signatures and for other types of support.

“Promotional” Material

It is helpful to have some materials to share with signers. In a few cases signers may want to know about your agenda or about the LP. At this stage in the campaign you probably haven't spent a lot of time fleshing out and polishing your positions, though it is good to develop a brief overview of your priorities and solutions to share with signers. You may also have information about the party and about libertarianism.

Brief Overview of your Agenda

So, consider developing a BRIEF OVERVIEW of your key positions and planned actions (three is good, four is ok if you must.) Do not overdo it. If your positions are not very succinctly stated they will not be helpful at the signature gathering stage of your campaign.

Campaign Brochure

If it is not a big effort for you *may* want to take the extra step to make up a brochure that gives a bit more detail about your agenda and about you. For most of us; developing a brochure at the signature gathering stage in your campaign – except for a very basic one – is probably not very practical.

Topical Brochures

There are several sources for free brochures addressing topical themes such as health care, monetary policy, drug policy, etc. Most notable, perhaps, is LPStuff.com which offers free topical brochures as pdf files. Another source of low priced topical brochures is the International Society for Individual Liberty at isil.org.

Local and State Libertarian Party Newsletters

One possibility for promotional material is newsletters from your local county party or the state LP newsletter.

Data Sources and Management

Membership List

One important source of names to contact is the list of Libertarian Party members within your district. You should be able to get that information from the state party or from your local (county) party chairperson.

Registered Voter List

The main source for contact information that you will use is the list of registered Libertarian Party voters in your district. That information should be available from the state party or from your local (county) party chairperson. (The chairperson is eligible, by law, to receive the data from the registrar of voters.) The data may also be available from the state party (LPC).

Data Management

Ideally you or someone you know is able to manipulate the data. You will need to be able to sort the data by city, zip code, precinct, and voting history and to print sorted data for selected people and for selected data fields. You may also use the data for mailings.

Sorting and printing can be accomplished with a basic spreadsheet. Mailing lists are more complicated. Importantly; if you need help with these tasks ask other candidates and other party members. Do not reinvent the wheel! Many candidates have already done this or have better skills than you do.

Know your District's Geography, Have Maps

Take time to familiarize yourself with the geography of areas where you will gather signatures before going, especially if you don't know the geography in the areas.

Make good use of maps, to get familiar with areas and to plot routes. On-line maps are quite helpful but paper maps are also good, especially if you'll be covering larger areas and/or in higher density urban areas.

AAA has good maps if you are a member and Thomas Guide books and foldout maps are available at randmcnally.com. Consider making a high quality copy of paper maps on which to locate targeted destinations and to plot routes.

Have a Menu of Ways for Signers to Get Involved

It is to have a "menu" of ways that signers and others could get involved – in your campaign, as a candidate or with the LP.

The menu could involve formalized positions including campaign treasurer, chair and vice chair. Or you can use less formal job scopes by asking for help requiring various skills such as a) fundraising, b) communications, c) press

contact, d) internet, e) signature gathering, f) phone calling, g) document development, h) document production, i) what is generally referred to as compliance, including keeping track of deadlines and required paperwork.

Note that having a spectrum of types of activities is helpful when attracting people to our cause because, obviously, different people have different amounts of time, different types and levels of expertise, and different interest.

Note also that the types of help you ask for depends on the type of campaign you wish to run. If you will be a less active candidate then one or two people may be enough. For a more aggressive campaign several or even many people will be needed.

Have Voter Registration Forms

It is advisable to have voter registration forms whenever you are gathering signatures or campaigning. These are used if friends or family agree to register or re-register to vote as a Libertarian so they may sign your signatures in lieu form. They are also helpful if you meet someone who expresses an interest in helping your candidacy or becoming a registered Libertarian voter. And, here are libertarians whose registration has lapsed and they are often willing to re-register.

You get the forms from the ROV office in the respective county. Get them when you go to get your signatures in lieu forms from the ROV. You will be asked to fill out and sign a short form indicating the serial numbers of the forms.

Create Form Packages

It is important to set up signature form packages (form packages). These form packages may be a) sent by mail, b) given directly to people, and c) left with or for someone if s/he is too busy or is not available.

Form packages include

- ✓ a cover letter or note – that introduces you and what is needed
- ✓ instructions describing what is needed, why, and how to help (see nclpc.org/candidates/ for examples)
- ✓ a copy of your signatures in lieu form (need one per candidate included in the mailing)
- ✓ a self-addressed envelope, preferably with return postage

Ideally the package has a distinctive envelope; one that does not look like junk mail or a flyer. Color is helpful, but keep it simple.

To make the package most useful; print the introduction letter and the instructions on one sheet of paper. Consider printing the letter on one side and the instructions on the other side.

Signature Gathering Tactics and Techniques

Checklist for Signature Gathering

The following is a list of items to have with you when you go signature gathering.

- ✓ Business Cards
- ✓ Pens (avoid pens with water based ink)
- ✓ Forms (avoid re-using forms from one day to the next)
- ✓ Clipboard(s)
- ✓ Promotional Materials (candidate's one pager or brochure, LP newsletters)
- ✓ Voter Registration Forms
- ✓ Menu of Ways for Signers to Get Involved
- ✓ Form Packages (to leave if someone is not at home)
- ✓ Map(s)
- ✓ List of Names (ideally sorted in the order that they will visited)
- ✓ Flashlight
- ✓ Cell phone and headset

General Tips

The following is a list of tactics that will help you to optimize your success.

- ✓ Target addresses at which there are two or more Libertarians.
- ✓ Target addresses that are very close to each other (sort by zip or by street).
- ✓ Target recent and consistent voting.
- ✓ Start with party members.
- ✓ Coordinate with candidates in overlapping districts.
- ✓ Dress neatly, be well groomed.
- ✓ Emphasize points of agreement.
- ✓ Be pleasant and agreeable, sound upbeat.

Register Libertarian Voters

One good source of signatures is friends and family who register to vote with the Libertarian Party. There's no need to hound or pester people to do it but it doesn't hurt to ask.

Importantly, for those who are reluctant to give up an existing party affiliation; it is perfectly legal to register as a Libertarian before the election, sign your petition and then re-register with the preferred party before the election.

You should even consider facilitating the process by filling out two voter registration forms for the helpful friend or family member: One to register as a Libertarian *and* one to re-register with the preferred party.

Note that by registering as a Libertarian s/he does give up the option to sign in lieu petition forms for a candidate in the preferred party; which is quite unlikely.

Door-to-Door

Perhaps the most common way to gather signatures is to use a variation of what might be called the door-to-door approach. It involves visiting registered voters at their homes or at prearranged locations.

Target addresses that a) are close together and b) where more than one registered Libertarian lives.

Emphasize people who a) vote regularly and/or b) have signed petitions for other Libertarian candidates and/or c) are party members.

Set up a route and a series of addresses to go to ahead of time. Map the route and have the map with you.

It's best to have a buddy driving, especially if there is much traffic and/or if you are not familiar with the area. Take a cell phone and headset, a clipboard, and if it will be dark take a flashlight.

If no one is home then leave a form package. Call to follow-up, to increase the chance that people will take action.

Appointments

For some prospects you may have to set an appointment to get their signature.

If needed; reassure people it only takes a minute or two. All you need is their name, address, city and signature.

Ideally you can set several appointments within a relatively small geographical area, after you get the first one.

You may want to call ahead to find out who a) is inclined to sign, b) is likely to be available, and c) has moved.

Some candidates would contend that it is better to visit registered voters without notice -- especially on the weekends or other times that they are likely to be at home -- rather than calling ahead. Calling ahead gives people an easy way to say no whereas many of those same people would be inclined to sign if you ask them face-to-face.

When setting an appointment

- ✓ ask for a time window -- the flexibility will be helpful
- ✓ ask for directions and landmarks
 - write down the directions and repeat them back

If someone is reluctant to set an appointment then offer to send a petition package to him/her. It's important to follow-up, in person or by phone, to increase the chance that people will take action. Be polite but persistent; tell her/him that you'd like to follow-up with a reminder in a few days if you don't receive the petition.

Signing "Events"

A signing event involves a publicized time and location for people to meet you and to sign your petition. It is also a good opportunity to tell people about how to get involved in your campaign and with the LP.

Start by locating good venues. Book store cafés and some coffee places are good. Notify prospective signers by email, by phone, by direct mail, in LP newsletters and on the web. Tell them when you'll be at the signing and provide directions and possibly a cell phone number.

Direct Mail

Direct mail (or just mail) is sent through the U.S. Postal Service (USPS). Depending on the amount of time you have for collecting signatures in person direct mail may be your most important option. And, direct mail may be especially important in larger districts and for areas with low population density.

As a general rule response rates are fairly low for direct mail: on the order of a few percent. So it is important to do what you can to increase the chances that possible signers will respond (and that they will respond correctly.)

Phone follow-ups – soon after a mailing – are important, in part because even motivated people will not respond unless they are contacted more than once.

Postcards

The lowest cost approach is to send postcards. Unfortunately it also yields the lowest response in part because signers must take a lot of initiative to do what you need.

If you do use postcards ask signers to call you so you can set an appointment to meet or as a second option offer to send a petition package by mail. If your petition and instructions are online then provide a link to them.

Petitions

If sending petitions by mail it is important to send complete form packages, as described above. They include a cover letter or note, instructions, a petition form and an addressed envelope.

Anecdotes and Observations

The following are suggestions and observations from LP candidates and local (county) party organizations competing in past elections. Note that some are contradictory. They are presented to give candidates more options because techniques that work for some people may not be as good for others. For example, some people's work schedule may preclude use of some techniques or some people prefer face-to-face contact while others prefer phone contact.

NetPost for Direct Mailings

LP San Francisco uses NetPost for newsletters and other mass mailings, and it seems to work quite well. Their only reservation remains that it's using the government monopoly... but they use the roads and mass transit too, so...

LP San Mateo has reports a lot of success with direct mail, but their past mailings were technically complex and labor intensive to prepare. However, they did look a lot like personal mail.

In 2006 they tried an all-digital approach, using NetPost Mailing On-Line (a service of the USPS.com, implemented by a contractor, RGN Communications). "Just add money, and the contractor does all the work." (Under \$1000 paid for over 1700 mail pieces, in 9*12 envelopes, including postage, mostly at nonprofit rates.)

County leaders developed a cover letter, scanned candidates' petitions, and uploaded seven PDF documents (representing all the combinations of 5 candidates in the county), along with seven mailing lists containing the appropriate subsets of the county's registered libertarians.

The packages sent look impersonal and lack reply envelopes.

Though they got a late start the results were satisfactory. They received 179 signatures from over 90 people--a 5% response rate--enough for nomination in each of the 3 districts that are mostly in their county. They concluded that if they had started sooner and were more organized they would have had even more success. They also suggest doing some simpler mailings early in the election cycle.

They also signed up two new members despite "soft-pedaling" that part of the appeal.

LP Santa Clara Leaders conclude that using NetPost is easier than preparing your own bulk mailings, but does have its own little wrinkles, and the error messages are worse than useless.

NetPost does accept other kinds of word processor documents--not just PDF's.

Amazingly, there is no minimum mailing size, so you can experiment relatively inexpensively.

Ted Brown – Observations and Tactics

These thoughts reflect experience from 14 campaigns for office as a Libertarian Party Candidate.

I have generally had better luck than others, sometimes averaging 4 signatures an hour, especially if I can get signatures from married couples.

Sometimes there is early encouragement, like a recent day when the first three places I went were successful, then it was more than two hours until the next one.

First of all, there is the issue of how many places you are visiting. If you are in an urban or suburban area, you should be able to go to about 10 homes per hour (but if you actually find someone and talk to them for a few minutes, that would slow it down a bit, but in a good way!)

Perhaps if you have trouble finding your way around, you could bring along a friend or relative to navigate, i.e. drive and locate the next place on the map while you are up at the door.

Also, if the area is crowded, having a driver means you don't have to waste time looking for parking. Some people have said that no one will open the door, when they are obviously home. This must be in the evening, a time I never go out, since if it's dusk or dark, people might be more suspicious.

Otherwise, be careful how you dress. Don't look like a bum, and be sure you're hair's brushed. Perhaps you look too frightful for someone to open the door.

Also, a good spiel is important. I say, "Hi, I'm Ted Brown from the Libertarian Party. I've come to visit you because you're registered to vote as a Libertarian. I'm collecting signatures to get our candidates on the ballot for next year's election. Would you be so kind as to help us out by signing a couple of petitions?" 98 times out of 100 the person will sign.

If someone says something like, "I'm not really a Libertarian," I respond, "You can vote for whomever you want. This will just help us get on the ballot and give the voters more choices." This usually does it. However, sometimes someone is irrational, like the guy yesterday who said he "didn't feel like signing" How do you argue with that!

Melissa Manfre – Observations and Tactics

I imported the registered voter data file into Excel, looked up the map coordinate for each street and then sorted them accordingly. I made copies of the Thomas Guide and highlighted the streets.

A little for prep work but my family each took a page and it wasn't too bad. I did not want to go to certain areas if I didn't have to so I did not look those areas up. I then made two copies of the list.

My husband drove and I jumped in and out. He looked at the map and called out a street. I then read off the address and he pulled in the driveway. I made notes on my list of the results (moved, signed, not home, etc.). I then made a new list when I hit the area again with the people who moved and signed removed and those that were not home noted.

I got a lot of no answers and moved. Only one person wouldn't sign for me, a kid heading off to work at Red Lobster. His dad felt so bad, he wanted to sign but was Republican and would not reregister.

The best time is Monday night (5:30 to 8:00), Saturday morning 9:00 to 11:00, Saturday afternoon (3:00 to 6:00) and Sunday afternoon (2:00 – 6:00).

I spent about 20-25 hours getting 76 signatures. I hit everyone in my local area several times if they weren't home, asking their family when they would be back or likely to be home. Most people were receptive to this once I explained what I was doing and that each signature saves me money.

Also, team up with others, I am collecting with two others which really helped. They got me about 55 signatures which saved me a whole week and a half of driving around.

Some people would not sign all the petitions but I tried to get as many as I could. If you can read their body language then you know how much you can push the issue. I sure it helps that I a 5'1" woman so I am not very "scary looking".

John Ballard – “Call and Go”

My best effort produced 84 valid signatures in roughly 10 hours of work. I used a cell phone to call as I was on the way to the house. If they answered, I went to the door and got a signature. If they didn't, I called the next house in the area. I averaged 8.4 signatures per hour.

Edward Teyssier (Chair, SDLP) – Direct Mail by County Party

What works very well in San Diego is to have the county party coordinate a petition mailing for all the partisan candidates in the county.

We typically send out about 3,500 to 4,500 envelopes, each containing three or four petitions, with a return envelope and a cover letter explaining how to fill out the petitions.

We've also coordinated with the local Registrar of Voters to authorize single sided petitions (instead of front and back). This helps two ways:

1. the copying costs of making a single sided vs. two sided petition is significant both in terms of time and money. When you're making about 14,000 petitions the savings of a few cents per petition are significant.
2. We also post the petitions on-line and having a single sided petition means there isn't any hassle about how the website visitor has to make a two sided copy.

The outgoing envelopes are pre-addressed so we don't have to mess around with labels and we also include a "stuff code" on the envelopes so that the stuffers know which petitions go into which envelopes.

When being addressed the envelopes are sorted by stuff combination so that we can stuff in large continuous batches.

And the envelopes are also printed with a sort code based on zip code so, after stuffing and sealing, we can rapidly get them re-aggregated by zip in order to take advantage of zip sorted postage rates.

We also use this mailing as membership outreach, voter registration renewal, and Libertarian Party announcements.

We typically get about 10-15% returns which, considering we sent out 3 or four petitions per envelope means our candidates get a significant number of petitions. Usually, all of our Cal. Senate candidates and 4 out of 6 U.S. House candidates get onto the ballot with few or no additional signatures required.

About 3 or 4 of our State Assembly members are similarly lucky and most get their 40 min. signatures so that they can simply pay the balance, if that's what they want to do.

We also get about 10-30 new members and we've gotten as much as thousands of dollars in contributions, either for the party or the respective candidates.

Organization and preparation is important. We have on occasion stuffed about 40,000 pieces of material (petitions, voter registration cards, membership information, petitions, return envelopes, cover letter, etc.) into about 4,000 envelopes, gotten them sealed, zip sorted and boxed for the post office all in one day.

Fred Mangles – Direct Mail

Even folks that send out exciting envelopes are down to just under 10% response, when they were double or close to double that last time.

I guess I must be the lucky one this time around. I sent out 101 mailers to Libertarians in Humboldt County. I originally planned on just 100 mailers but I had one returned "moved- no forward address" and took the return envelope from that mailer and used it for one more mailer. I received 26 back which gives me about a 26% return. But, those 26 envelopes contained something like 46 signatures so I did quite well! I also gathered 41 sigs by hand mostly by just taking an hour or two each weekend to drive around.

I wish I could say that "experience" was what got me such good results from the mailing, but I don't think I can since some of the people, like those on my LPHC e-mail list, that I consider myself in regular contact with didn't return the petitions even with a postpaid reply envelope. That includes one guy who said he'd be happy to help get some sigs for me in his out of the way place outside of town. He didn't even return his or his wife's sigs!

In the past I/ we have gotten about the same +/- 10% that everyone else gets whether or not we had postpaid envelopes, or not. This time I decided to just mail to 100 people (and the 5 addresses in Del Norte County that had more than one Lib listed there). I decided to go ahead and put stamps on the return envelope mainly because I know how I am about stamps now: I used to buy stamps in rolls of 100 but now that I do nearly everything via internet, I just buy a book of 10 that might last some time. Because I only have a few stamps on hand at any given time, I'm pretty picky about how I use them. I assume many others might be, or are becoming, the same way. So, I felt I'd have a better chance of a prompt return by including a paid return envelope.

Experience helped a little in picking some of the names of the Registered Libertarians list. I've seen the same names for years and some just stand out for one reason or another. First I picked the addresses with more than one Libertarian which took around 46 or so mailers. Then I picked out names of people I knew or remembered had returned stuff before (which doesn't really mean they'll return them again). Then I started picking random names in areas just outside Eureka I most likely wouldn't want to potentially waste time driving to along with a few from other cities and at least one person in each smaller town.

I hand wrote the name and address on each envelope so it would look less like junk mail but used an LPHC stamp for the return address. That idea Bruce had about writing on the envelope what's inside is one I'll have to remember for next time. My introduction letter was probably much the same as all others but I made sure to mention not to use PO Boxes when signing the petition and to fill out the affidavit on the back. If I was mailing to a PO Box, I'd highlight the "No PO Boxes" text in the letter. I also highlighted all parts of the petition that needed to be filled out and the line on the bottom of the petition reminding of filling out the affidavit. I only had one person not fill out the back in all the returned petitions.

So, not a bad return- 26% from Humboldt. 40% from Del Norte (2 of the 5 returned but one came a day after the deadline). All for something like \$95 in postage and copy costs. Be even cheaper if I used a bulk mail permit.

Gail Lightfoot – Use a Mailhouse's Non-Profit Permit

Any Mail House can use their Nonprofit for your mailing. Under the latest PO Rules the mail house nonprofit indicia goes on your piece and the rate is set by the size, number and sorting of the mailing. We use Its In The Mail, which is a small individually owned business we found by checking various similar services for the best prices.

We have no problems getting lists read or mailings done at a reasonable cost (no charge for deciphering a list we have a problem reading due to our low level of computer literacy).

Try contacting the mail houses near you for their price structure if you prefer to help a small owner operated business rather than a large monopoly.

Terms

Filing Fees – Fees required for you to file your paperwork to be on the ballot. The fee amount depends on the office that the candidate is running for. (Note that these fees can be partially or totally offset by signatures in lieu of filing fees).

Form Package – A package of materials that contains paperwork needed for someone to fill out your signatures in lieu form without you or another circulator being present. They contain a letter of instructions and one or more petition (on for each candidate).

Nominating Signatures – The number of signatures required for you to be nominated as an official candidate from the Libertarian Party. Nominating Signatures must be from registered Libertarian Party voters. The number required depends mostly on the office that the candidate is running for.

ROV – Registrar of Voters

Signatures in Lieu – Signatures gathered from registered libertarians in your district that are used to offset filing fees.

Signatures in Lieu Form – This is the form on which signatures are gathered. The actual name of the form is the *Petition In Lieu of Filing Fee*.