

Committee for Ballot Access and Retention

Report to LPGa ExCom: 07 Sep 2019

The participation of the Committee in our discussion forum has been sparse and doesn't give much to work with so far as forming a consensus from a robust discussion. 2019 is growing long in the tooth and it is no longer acceptable to postpone substantive feedback to the ExCom due to lack of participation, so this report is going to mostly be my own opinions, that of the Chair. By the time you see this all the Committee members will have had time to review this report and respond if they feel the need.

I. The 2020 Districted Races, General Assembly and US House

Participating in the Districted races in Georgia consistently, with vigor and determination, would be a major move forward for the LPGa. As you all know the grueling process of completing ballot access petitions has wreaked havoc with our motivation to even bother. Of late I've been considering this problem and that perhaps we need to stop and review our approach and priorities. At the end of this report you'll find an essay, "Timeless Resolve", that I've written that is a plan for us to create our own way into the Districted races, to make our presence in these races known, and be permanent.

Please review these ideas and if the ExCom decides to acknowledge and support this as a viable direction then I am willing to help and perhaps other members of the Ballot Access Committee would be willing to help with building a team of district candidates for the 2020 election and beyond.

II. The 2020 Statewide Races

The LPGa was originally formed in 1972, yet did not attempt to place a candidate on the ballot until 1988. In that year the LPGa began a huge statewide ballot access petition that resulted in placing three PSC candidates on the ballot. This petition required the signature of 1% of the registered voters in Georgia, what would have been about 70,000 signatures. An enormous effort, an incredible success.

Not only did this achievement place the three original PSC candidates on the ballot but it has given us standing to place statewide candidates on the ballot without petitioning every election year since, but with one catch. *We must properly place at least one statewide candidate every election year that receives a vote total equivalent to 1% of the total statewide registered voters.* Since, and including 1988, the LPGa has placed a total of 71 statewide candidates on the ballot.

Know that every election year our statewide ballot access is at risk.

From experience it is known that a voter is more likely to vote Libertarian in the PSC race than in the higher level races. This reality, for statewide ballot access reasons, makes it vital that we always place PSC candidates on the ballot.

Finding, and supporting, candidates for the two PSC races in 2020 is the most important task before the LPGa ExCom between now and next year's candidate qualifying week.

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Your input and insight is welcome. The Committee can be contacted any time through the Chair (preferred) or via any of the members.

Mark Mosley, Chair

Timeless Resolve

The plan to build an LPGa ballot presence for the districted races.

Perhaps we have been giving too much priority to the ballot access petitions. Is it time to step back and rethink our strategy for participating in the political process in Georgia?

What motivates your desire, your drive to take time out of your life and attempt to influence politics? Is it the myriad of bureaucracy that's been created that determine your standing, your ability to become a candidate? Or is it really something else?

As Libertarians, most of us begin as philosophers in some form. The excitement we experience as we discover the ideas of Liberty, and begin to see intelligible solutions to the ills of contemporary culture is simply breathtaking. This experience changes lives. It is natural that we would be compelled to tell the world, to help our friends understand what we now see so clearly.

Politics, done well, is exactly this.

Engaging the field of ideas through politics is a natural outgrowth of this excitement. The idea here is to recapture your excitement, to create a new strategy that uses your motivation in a way that is meaningful to you, and possible.

What we want is a plan that uses your time and energy in ways that make your life better, and is reasonable for a person with normal responsibilities. We seek to direct your political time in a direction that develops skills to serve you the remainder of your life. In short, to make your experience of being an LPGa candidate the experience of a lifetime.

This will be accomplished by using the defined write-in candidate process in combination with the process for becoming a formally nominated LPGa candidate. What this will require of us is to better learn to stand up and be known, to discover ways to do this effectively, to know that we are worthy, to know that our values and beliefs are as valid as anyone else's. We will learn to compete in the field of ideas, knowing that we have every right to participate.

Here is where we begin:

- 1. A candidate with a long game view**
- 2. Our candidate must be committed to transcending any limitations in his communication skills, to develop and refine these skills to a high level of performance**
- 3. Our candidate WILL be on the ballot, either as a formally nominated LPGa candidate, or as a Libertarian Write-In candidate.**

Is the desperate, grinding experience of a ballot access petition really necessary for us to influentially compete in politics, or have we made this into a form of learned helplessness?

A ballot access petition, if it happens at all, will grow out of this candidacy.

The real goal, the one that matters, is to create an environment of influence, to build rapport with your community. You will become known in your community. You will become a credible source of information, and guidance, in your community. You will be trusted as a steward of your community. It is a secondary consideration as to whether you will be able to complete a ballot access petition. We have been limiting ourselves by assuming that we have to complete the ballot access petition before we can participate and become influential.

The endgame is to support a deep and lasting resolve in all of us, to always and forever, even in the presence of frustration and heartbreak, remain determined and resilient ... never to lose sight of what is dear to us.

The Plan (alpha version)

1. Develop the candidate's ideology
 - a) Signature issue
 - b) Supporting issues
 - c) Background issues
 - d) Expert issues
2. Build the communication tools
 - a) Website
 - b) Business cards
 - c) Issue specific flyers, Ready to print as needed
3. Your campaign will begin, and be centered in your precinct
 - a) Find a way to introduce yourself to all the voters in your precinct
 - b) The first objective is to make every voter in your precinct know that you are a candidate.
4. Make connections with any local media
 - a) create a series of press releases, this is your technique for speaking to the usual media
5. Build a communication infrastructure in social media
6. Build censor proof communication system
 - a) Redundant website (offshore?)
 - b) email list
 - c) use offshore technology
 - d) build a video blog
 - e) use alt-social media as you can
7. Choose a relevant local issue and make second contact with voters in your precinct
 - a) establish your credibility as a person of intelligence, realism and high quality support
8. more?
 - a) maybe, it depends, we'll see

This plan, this revision in my thinking, has been inspired by all of my experience in the LPGa, most notably:

- **The resilience, and persistence of Martin Cowen in his 2018 US House campaign**
- **The commitment, struggles and frustrations of Demond Kennedy and Jay Strickland in their unsuccessful attempts to become Georgia House candidates in 2018**
- **The success of Ben Brandon in his 2004 campaign for Dade County Executive. The only partisan win in LPGa history.**

Yo Soy Terminado