

Highlights of 2014 Libertarian Candidates Survey

A survey of 2014 Libertarian candidates was conducted January 8- February 9, 2015. The survey was sent to 661 candidates for which email addresses were on file. 264 responded to all or a portion of the questions.

Breakdown of 264 respondents:

40 - US House

24 – statewide federal (US Senate or at-large US House)

60 – Statewide state office (governor, secretary, etc)

85 – State district office (mostly legislature)

55 – Local (including DC mayor)

Highlights of Survey Responses

Events and outreach

- 155 Libertarian campaigns distributed a total of 23,408 yard signs.
- 150 Libertarian campaigns distributed a total of 14,635 bumper stickers.
- 153 Libertarian campaigns distributed a total of 1,015,533 brochures or other printed materials.
- 133 Libertarians campaigns visited a total of over 142,087 households.
- 98 out of 153 candidates were a featured speaker at one or more campaign events.
- 48 out 139 published campaigns memes. 78% of candidates believed the memes were somewhat to highly effective.
- 120 out of 152 Libertarians campaigns had a website. (Note: Many candidates who did not take the survey had no website.)
- 122 out of 158 Libertarians campaigns had a Facebook page.
- 62 out of 148 Libertarians campaigns had a Twitter account with a total of 33,115 followers.
- Most found Facebook and other forms of social media to be the most effective way to reach voters. Community events, face-to-face contact and the campaign websites were also cited.
- 47 out of 103 coordinated activities with non-Libertarian political organizations.
- 8 out of 135 reported receiving support indirectly from a PAC.

Message

- 54 out of 74 noticed that voters were more receptive than in the past to Libertarian candidates and Libertarian solutions.
- The issue that candidates reported resonated most with voters was small government/less government/cutting spending. The second-most cited issue was legalizing / decriminalizing marijuana.
- Of the 112 who responded, 52 said they could have used help with formulating their Libertarian Solutions.
- 41 out of 118 reported being accused of being a “spoiler.”

Media

- The average candidate was featured in 2-3 print articles, interviewed on 2-3 radio shows, and in 1-2 TV news reports.
- 25 out of 146 who responded were featured in national media.
- Out of 155 candidates, polls were published in 48 of their campaigns. About 2/3rds were included in some or all of the polls.
- Candidates were included in 33 out of 82 televised debates for their campaigns and 13 out of 18 radio debates.
- 34 out of 147 participated in one or more pre-primary debates or candidate forums
- Two-thirds of candidates reported getting no or just minimal media coverage.
- 77 of 137 who responded reported making regular contact with media
- Half of the 174 who responded sent out 3 or more press releases during their campaign
- 18 out of 173 held press conferences

Volunteers:

- Facebook was the main vehicle used to recruit volunteers, although no means proved wildly successful. More than 90% said they needed more volunteers than they had.
- Candidates’ friends, family and other personal contacts were the primary source of volunteers.
- Recruiting at events, contacts from past campaigns and websites were also cited as sources.
- Volunteers were used primarily for social media outreach, working events, and canvassing.
- Median average of 4 volunteers per Libertarian campaign.
- Social media help and local organizers were cited as most critical to campaigns.

Fundraising

- 184 candidates reported raising \$1,252,480 (average \$6,807). Of these, 67 reported raising no funds. The top 3 fundraisers raised \$672,339 (more than half of all funds raised). The top 16 fundraisers raised \$1,004, 820 (more than 80% of all funds raised).
- Not included in the above totals were two fusion candidates who also ran on the GOP ticket. They reported raising \$650,000 and \$750,000 respectively.
- 173 candidates reported that they contributed \$733,070 to their own campaigns (average \$4,213).
- Slightly more than half had an online donation page. Most used PayPal for donations. Pyrex and Anedot were also used.
- Of the 82 candidates who filed campaign finance reports, 29 reported having difficulty or found campaign reporting cumbersome.
- One reported that an inexpensive app called Campaign ToolBox was very helpful.

Miscellaneous

- 64 out of 115 candidates felt the goals they set for their campaign were met; 31 felt they partially met goals, or fell short but were satisfied with what the campaign achieved; 20 did not feel they met goals, or did so minimally.
- 31 out of 119 said they had unrealistic expectations of what their vote total would be.
- 66 out of 133 said they plan to run for office again; 31 said probably or maybe; 17 are undecided; 19 said no or unlikely.
- 108 out of 116 indicated they intend to stay active in other ways.
- Print vendors who were cited as offering good prices were: supercheapsigns.com, Vistaprint, bannersonthecheap.com, Gotprint.com, Sign Rocket, Stars and Stripes Chicago, and yardsignwholesale.com.
- Asked what if any expanded support candidates would like to see from the national or state LPs, 115 responded (some gave more than one suggestion):
 - 25 want more volunteers
 - 22 want funds or help fundraising
 - 20 want more candidate training or advice
 - 9 want literature templates or free literature
 - 7 want more coordination or support from state LP affiliate
 - 8 want help building websites
 - 5 want more support across the board

- Asked what if anything they would have done differently knowing what they know now, 120 responded (some cited more than one item):
 - 26 would not have done anything differently
 - 22 would have started earlier to recruit volunteers, raise money or other campaign activities
 - 12 would have done “lots” of things differently
 - 11 would have raised more money
 - 10 would not have run or would have run as a major party candidate
 - 33 cited other things they would have done differently

Individual Responses to Questions

What was the most memorable moment of your campaign?

- having both the r & d candidates tell me i needed to host a radio show
- Being on the debate stage, answering a question and watching my millionaire R opponent nodding in agreement with just about everything I said.
- People along parade routes being excited to see a Libertarian candidate
- Working with my family and friends that supported me.
- my opponent refusing to campaign
- Kicking butt in one of the larger debates/forums
- when a homeless lady gave me a dollar for my campaign.
- Beating my opponent with a comfortable margin despite negative press circulating untrue accusations from government agencies.
- My first radio interview
- Receiving hate messages from liberal voters
- Getting the Boulder Weekly's endorsement
- Getting emails saying "you've got my vote" after appearances
- My debate with Larry Smith
- at the debate, when the D opponents turned out to be barely articulate, I have minor children who are more articulate
- Being on TV, having a teleprompter
- my nervousness
- Interviews
- Watching the returns come in and realizing that I had received more votes than the difference between two major
- Responding to numerous questions, new followers on twitter and media mentions were the most memorable moments of our campaign.
- candidate forums
- Election day
- Having people recognize my name as a candidate when I would introduce myself as a blogger at events
- Watching election results on TV

- the public debate held by a neighborhood assoc
- Too many great times to mention
- Suing the State of Nebraska for breaking election laws
- having libertarians explain to me how we will never win
- Conducting radio/TV interviews.
- Hearing involuntary laughter from his supporters and people who still voted for him when I buried my nutball opponent
- When I and my green party opponent walked into our republican opponent's campaign headquarters to hand deliver debate invitations, and the girl behind the desk seemed astonished that ANYONE was in the office.
- When it was over!
- visiting the strip club in Williston, ND
- None
- Making radio as with my seven year old son
- Debating my republican opponent
- Every time someone said "I support you."
- The LULAC/NAACP candidate forum
- asking people to vote for me who said yes
- getting 3,787 votes
- Getting sworn-in.
- Looking at the election results the next day
- Election night seeing my name and my numbers roll in
- Wiping the floor with one supposedly small gov republican candidate at a forum
- Getting some zingers in at my Democrat opponent at the Ark Press Assoc debate
- It was fun debating Elijah Cummings at League of Women Voters
- Being in a parade.
- beating out 4th, Danny Stroud
- Two moments, one was talking to many people at the Primary day polls while petitioning, and getting to talk to the community directly. Two, hearing that a member of the local Republican party said that my manner of answering questions succinctly was something they hoped to replicate in the future.
- 1. Getting arrested for petitioning; 2. Gary Johnson visit
- The RoboCall scandal
- Leading in the write-in vote
- speaking to the current Board of Regents (open comments), reminding them I'm watching, needling Republican opponent who didn't complete LWV questionnaire
- Recruiting a candidate for governor.
- Going on stage in the very first state debate in front of 2,000 people live
- Doing a press conference in front of the Alamo in San Antonio.
- my signs being stolen
- Winning
- Debate
- The 4 local debates where I got to speak directly to the people.

- speaking at the libertarian local meeting
- Nearly doubling my expected number of votes
- Having friends call me up out of the blue to tell me they voted for me ... Happy to have the Libertarian alternative!
- Noting stood out
- debates
- Getting nominated by the local party members.
- Debates #2 and I realized I truly was the best candidate who lacked a financial voice to be heard statewide.
- Getting laughter and applause for a one-word answer to a candidates forum question.
- staying up till 2am making signs and drinking with friends...the 2am drunken signs were not presentable.
- October 28 Cleveland City Club Debate
- a father telling his preteen kids that the "Libertarians are who will save our country"
- Having someone say that I was forging a path for the future. Someone saying that I was an inspiration for generations to come later on.
- Letter from voter after election thanking me for running.
- Election night
- My opponent not showing up for a debate
- Election night when they announced we had more than 6% of the total vote. I was shocked! Previous Libertarian candidate received less than 300 votes. Plus there's too many instances of people telling me they voted for the first time in their lives in support of me, and these are 50-year-olds.
- more libertarian candidates this time
- Meeting voters and hearing their thoughts.
- A funny. I handed a gentleman my campaign card that said Vote Libertarian at the top. He glanced at it and said, "I didn't know the Librarians had a party." I said, "They do. They're very nice people and you should vote for one." I used that story many times. I also received several vote because my campaign car (parades and events) is a 1932 Ford coupe with a 5 inch chop. I drove it or a 29 roadster with my magnetic campaign signs.
- Discussing issues with people
- I got a laugh from some non-Libertarian candidates.
- Public sign waving events.
- Receiving Joe Walsh's endorsement on his radio show.
- Not being able to get anyone willing to run in my stead.
- Participating in the nationally televised debate.
- Texas Farm Bureau forum
- speaking with a person who was concerned by my advocacy of an open border, and after my argument I was able to convince her that my position was the right one.
- Not one.
- numerous

- A major chain of newspapers editorialized that my libertarian ideas were significant and valuable.
- Standing in the rain and talking to voters. It was a phenomenal experience!
- Participated in a televised forum
- Standing ovation after TV interview
- People listened to me.
- final debate on tv and spending time with edwin edwards
- Speaking for 30 minutes to a crowd of 1100, Sharing the megaphone with my 6 and 4 year old daughters
- When the incumbent argued with me openly at a public forum. What an idiot.
- Parade
- Claiming I spent zero dollars
- Getting emails and messages on Facebook from family who were following returns
- Favorable press from Seattle Times
- Not one moment, but the number of my friends and colleagues who took the time after the election to say they were proud of me for even trying, when most people just sit and complain
- Getting a sitting Senator who was the Senate Lead on single payer visibly upset when I made it clear he didn't know how much things would cost
- Meeting Karl Tatgenhorst and Mike Jasper at the Danville HS Candidates Night
- Sitting in a political forum and talking about our counties issues and projecting libertarian solutions to them
- Following the election results online.
- My first debate closing statement. I shocked a few people.

What was the most gratifying aspect of your campaign?

- 58,000 votes
- 60,000 votes recorded
- All the voters who wrote and called me thanking me for running and giving them a better choice for governor
- Becoming the first Libertarian elected to office in my county.
- Being a voice for people have gone long without being heard.
- Being applauded for being a young guy running against the incumbents
- Being cheered on by Alaskans.
- Being endorsed by a few newspapers
- Being involved
- being on the ballot, getting 3787 votes
- Breaking some people's thinking outside of the MSM box
- Changing hearts and minds (albeit not as often as I hoped for).
- changing the local perspective and teaching
- did better than our governor candidate %age

- doing nothing and getting the highest number of votes I've ever received, and matching the highest percentage of the total vote.
- Doing something
- Earning 50,000 votes
- experience
- Facing my worst fear (tv debate) and not messing up too much.
- Finding substantial support for my ideas among a large number of people (if not percentage)
- Finding that many people were receptive to Libertarians
- getting 22% of the vote without spending any money
- Getting my name out for '16
- Getting our message out in forums and debates.
- Getting results so much stronger than anyone guessed.
- Getting to meet people and being treated with respect
- Goodwill from colleagues in the legal profession.
- got 10% of vote without campaigning
- Got some reasonably good press from a couple of outlets
- hard to say
- Having a donate page was the most satisfying achievement even if no donations occurred online
- Having far greater number of votes than was expected.
- Having people at festivals, after seeing some of what someone else had or over hearing a conversation literally run after us seeking more lit.
- having the respect of many people that I didn't know before
- hear people's reaction that the candidate took time to meet with them face to face.
- Hearing people ask me if I will run again.
- Hearing the cars honking and the thumbs up.
- Helping party maintain voting momentum on the ballot with small incremental gains in some polling areas.
- How the community comes together to listen to each other and appreciate differing viewpoints, and reasonable discussion.
- I got 3606 votes.
- I got the Libertarian name out there
- I met a lot of great people.
- I was able to get some people off their asses and angry enough to go up against the status quo
- Increasing vote total with 40% lower turnout
- Interacting with the residents
- It was fun
- Just running for office
- lots of people told me they voted for me.
- Many people told me they were glad I was running
- Meeting the people. They all have the same problems.
- Meeting Awesome People and getting involved

- Meeting new people and promoting libertarian ideal's.
- meeting new people and promoting the libertarian message
- Meeting new people who were receptive to what I had to say. Also, national blog radios that noticed me and the national LP.
- meeting people
- meeting people who were fed up with the status quo
- Meeting people, creating Media relations
- Meeting supporters from around the state.
- Meeting the voters of Louisiana
- Meeting voters.
- Messages, emails and phone calls from ordinary people supporting and encouraging my campaign
- More than double vote % as previous LP record for IL state Treasurer
- more votes
- my winning opponent asking to meet with me to discuss my issues
- no cost
- not mine, but it was gratifying when I turned in signatures for candidates, and when they thanked me for what I did for them.
- now winning the election so now I do not have to give up my day job
- Our Campaign published a great amount of information with our available resources. We provided a viable option for our district in Kansas.
- People appreciated my efforts.
- People enthusiastically supporting the campaign and its message.
- People telling me they voted for me.
- people voted for me
- Performing so well in our first stare debate in front of 2,000 people; the extensive media coverage and the ones we did so well at; and finally, getting requests from supporters in China and Canada and many states
- positive reception of our message by other candidates
- Preventing the Green Party Candidate from finishing a strong second
- pride in trying to make a difference
- Proving beyond a doubt that most nutballs pretending to be Republicans are cafeteria RINOs
- Received most votes of all Libertarian county-wide candidates.
- Receiving 57,069 votes, most ever for LP in MD
- Receiving the votes.
- Running as a Libertarian
- satisfy my conscious about doing everything I can to advance Liberty for all
- Seeing that some many people voted for me, even though I did not win.
- sharing Libertarian ideas with people, planting the notion that the Libertarians were someone to be aware of
- Showing that minor party candidates can make a difference
- Significant support from members of my community, improved relations with city government, offered position within city government

- someone thanking me, telling their children about Libertarians "saving our Country"
- Speaking directly with voters, most of whom had no prior understanding of Libertarian platform and principles.
- Speaking the truth always.
- Speaking to a group that over 30 college students showed up to hear me speak.
- Spreading the message of freedom
- Spreading the Libertarian gospel
- Still debating about it
- support from neighborhood groups that are not generally libertarian
- talking politics with people and actually have them listen
- Talking to people from all different walks of life and hearing how fed up they were with the way our government is operating
- talking to so many different people
- That it's over.
- That people had a CHOICE. (There was only going to be a R candidate running)
- That the issues I talked about are now being talked about in the Senate -- Industrial Hemp, GMO food.
- The courage I gained by approaching random people
- The fact that the answers from sitting Senators who have never been challenged changed considerably
- The gratitude from voters of giving them a real choice
- The huge amount of support I received by sticking to my principles.
- The number of people who viewed me as the candidate who made the most sense.
- The number of supporters I received from people who are traditionally Rs or Ds
- The opportunity
- The people I worked with and met.
- Tremendously positive response from community leaders, including from my opponent
- Trying to make a difference
- Two parts
- Understanding the process and difficulties a lot more.
- Vote results, making contact with other patriots.
- voter awareness
- we collected enough city signatures, and I came in 3rd.
- Web site development
- When it was over.
- Winning ;-)
- winning the challenge to my candidacy
- Young people on campus getting it.

Was there anything you found disappointing about your campaign?

Of the 122 who responded (some with more than one answer):

- 12 found nothing disappointing
- 32 cited lack of party support or volunteers
- 20 cited lack of media coverage or debates
- 20 cited lower vote total than expected or not winning
- 12 cited voter apathy, ignorance or allegiance to Ds/Rs
- 9 cited lack, or relative lack, of funds
- 5 cited lack of time or conflict between time on campaign and family life
- 3 cited disappointment in their own efforts
- 2 cited not making the ballot
- Other disappointments cited:
 - N.Y. election law is rigged against minor party candidates
 - Lack of receptivity by close friends and family
 - The opposition was negative and toxic
 - reality
 - Sort of pointless exercise.
 - State rules regarding the voter pamphlet for candidate profiles required either too much money, or too many signatures.
 - Lying and deception from the Green party candidate
 - Lack of events to attend
 - The local clerk's office botched the ballots and had me listed as an independent rather than a libertarian.
 - That the Republicans/Democrats want to make sure that no third party gets elected and will use any means to make that happen.
 - That there really was no campaign/election. Like most districts in the USA, Gerrymandering determines the winner years in advance.
 - Incumbent Republican refused to openly debate me throughout entire campaign
 - Direct mail brochures are less cost-effective than I hoped.

What are you most proud of about your campaign?

- 19% vote against a 14 year incumbent in a fiercely republican district with only \$700 and 3 months campaigning.
- 3600+ votes with no money spent in any form by any person.
- 4% of vote
- 4000 votes on \$2.00 postage
- As far as I know, I received the highest percentage of any Libertarian in the US with 36%
- Beating out Danny Stroud
- Being straightforward and forthcoming about my stance on issues

- better than average results for first time 3 way race
- Changed some people's minds about what a Libertarian stands for.
- Doing it.
- Feedback from friends that they voted for me.
- Final results in the most democratic stronghold district. We actually got more votes than a republican candidate did with 5 times the campaign expenses
- Fixing the voter registration issue that allowed libertarians to register to vote at the DMV.
- For me, the citizen's debate forum. I am deaf, the idea of speaking in front of cameras, radio stations & TV outlets was intimidating but I kicked ass! I'm very proud of myself for that. The other thing is the fact I actually ran for office. Everyone I knew said I was crazy to run for office and I did it, learned a lot, and learned so much.
- Gave people choice and exposure for LP
- getting 3787 votes
- getting 4+% in the election
- Getting ballot status for the party
- Getting the "unheard" alternatives some exposure
- Going against my manager's advice, and creating my own closing statement at the debate. I hear it was pretty good (I don't watch myself on TV).
- Got 25% of the vote
- Got more votes than any other 3rd party candidate
- Grassroots effort and success
- Highest vote total for LP for congress in CT/record state LP fundraising for 2012
- Honest and positive, no mud-slinging
- Honest. Fair. Every statement was proved by state and federal data. Every conclusion was supported by at least two data points and a strict logical progression.
- How close I came despite the odds.
- How people reacted to me one on one when I talked to them about the issues.
- I am most proud of how amazing the local community was in coming together to listen to me, and support my run.
- I am proud of the 17,000+ Arkansas voters that were willing to break from the century old 2-party system and vote for me to be their next U.S. Senator
- I came from nowhere and now I'm involved and people are coming to me for answers and to rally everyone together
- I contributed to a notable national vote for Libertarians in the off-year elections.
- I did a lot of work, research, engaging voters from Mn and other states, and took direct action on many issues.
- I gave the people a choice. The RINO would have run unopposed if I hadn't
- I got 1500 votes without trying to get any.
- I had more positive attention from major media and more endorsements than in my previous two campaigns for the same office.
- I had to do 95% of the work myself and did it
- I helped maintain the appearance of Democracy in America.

- I never compromised my positions or my principles.
- I promoted Liberty.
- I ran
- I ran for office, there are a lot of people that could but did not.
- I ran it truthfully and ethically
- I tried
- I was included in every debate and performed well. I think I advanced the Libertarian Party in North Dakota.
- I was outspent \$400,000 to \$9998
- I was the most informed, prepared and qualified to hold office.
- I won
- I won 21% of the despite starting late and being poorly organized
- I'm proud that I ran for office.
- I'm told I got the highest % for a non-R/D US Congress candidate in Iowa since the WW 1 Progressives.
- Independence
- It puts the lie to the 2 parties.
- It was fun
- It was professional, polished, we held great press worthy fundraisers and we were active! We worked almost every single weekend doing active events for the campaign and during the week we always did 2-3 events if not more.
- Keeping message based on issues rather than personal attacks on my opponent
- LPRC membership is up and the message of liberty really got around.
- Media Relations -
- My 7% vote total was the third highest in the state for races with 3 or more candidates.
- my highest vote share so far >7%; data showing I took 2 1/2 times votes from D as R
- My performance in my debate
- My public positions
- New LPM members
- no campaigning at all and got 10 percent of the vote. my people are great! I'll try next time (was double-full-time with work and school during campaign time)
- No special interest funding
- Not getting in the dirt and slinging mud.
- not giving up
- Nothing
- Obtaining public exposure
- Our endorsement by Gov. Gary Johnson & Optics: Our campaign had stickers, campaign signs, and position statements/papers of noticeable and respectable quality that still make our campaign proud!
- Perseverance
- Putting the party and freedom on the ballot.
- Raised my public profile dramatically.

- raising money for the wounded warrior project
- Ran a clean, respectable campaign. Having never have run before, I learned a lot about campaigning.
- Reaching over 1.2million Texans with my message of hope and options
- Reaching people. Many people told me I was the first libertarian they had voted for.
- Recruiting 30+ local candidates
- Running an honest campaign
- Running.....I am not a politician. I am a disgruntled voter!
- Securing full ballot status for the LP in Wisconsin.
- Smashing the vote record
- spreading the libertarian message
- Staying honest ... NEVER compromising.
- Surviving the disappointment of 19.8%.
- Taking almost 1/5 of votes despite being outspent 100:1.
- That I changed some of the conversation
- That I didn't come in last in a field of 5.
- That I ran and had 18,082 people support me with a vote.
- That I received as many votes as I did with very little resources and personnel
- That I was serious and thorough, in stark contrast to my opponents.
- That I was the youngest person running in my country.
- That I worked as hard as I could, met my goals and introduced three counties of voters to Libertarians
- That we finished with 28.06% of the vote total
- That we gave honest answers to every question and that Lorenzo ran with me.
- That we went up against the republican Party , in a republican county and almost won, spending only 6000 dollars
- The amount of door knocking and citizen interaction I created
- The amount of votes I received for the amount of money I spent.
- The banner campaign
- the help and support of the veteran community
- The number of votes I received.
- the ratio of dollar spent to the votes received
- the verbal lashing I gave during the debate
- The voter support I received from people I had never met.
- We finished what we started
- We gained 8% more votes with a 40% lower turnout, with less money and volunteers than 2012.
- we made it through
- We provided a real Libertarian option with viable solutions for the challenges that face our state.
- We shed light on what Liberty is in a 95% Republican district.
- We won!
- Website

- Winning
- With little to no money we sat at the debate table at 2 out of the 3 congressional debates.
- zero compromising on principles