



VIA E-MAIL AND ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

January 27, 2018

Libertarian National Committee
1444 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-3403

RE: Messaging of the Vice Chair of the LNC, Arvin Vohra, and the San Diego
Libertarian Party's Call for Removal

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the LNC:

The San Diego Libertarian Party is one of the largest county affiliates in the country – and by our measure, perhaps the largest. We also have the distinction of being female led. I am the Executive Chair and Susan Bigknife is our Vice Chair. This letter is on behalf of the county party, and specifically from myself and Ms. Bigknife. Also represented in this letter is Martha de Forest, who is a Libertarian activist and fundraiser in San Diego.

We write to urge correction of the LNC's messaging to the public. Mr. Vohra's communications has damaged the Libertarian party in two significant ways. First, it is damaging the reputation and recruiting efforts of the Libertarian party, including its affiliates. Second, it is illustrative of why the party continues to have difficulty in attracting and retaining women as activists, voters, and leaders. We urge removal of Mr. Vohra from his position as Vice Chair as the strongest and clearest correction.

Mr. Vohra is in a position of leadership for the party. Regardless of whether his words are "officially" sanctioned by a vote of the LNC or by the platform, they will be regarded by the public as such. To deny this, is to deny the nature of the office.

We have observed the arguments about Mr. Vohra's most recent posts, including his attempts to clarify and justify them. Regardless of his intended meaning, it is clear that many people view his comments as condoning and justifying pedophilia. This is unacceptable.

Without a doubt, the vast majority of the public views the sexual exploitation of children as horrifying and evil. This must be a bright line for the party. A party that does not vehemently

decry sexual abuse of children is simply not palatable to nearly every American adult – the very people whom we are attempting to persuade to donate, volunteer, and vote for our party candidates.

I was proud of the party when its national representatives made clear statements against racism during the Charlottesville riots. We were seen as a party that condemned the milquetoast statements of President Trump and the dog-whistles of white supremacists.

It is hypocritical for the party's national representatives to take a permissive, lukewarm stand on the issue of the sexual exploitation of minors. Just as Trump was wrong to leave a crack in the door for racism to walk through, the Libertarian Party will be wrong to leave a crack in the door for child abusers and rapists to walk through.

Many Libertarians have attempted to explain to Mr. Vohra, using varying degrees of tactfulness, why his comments are troubling and give the impression that Libertarians think that there should be no limits on sex with children. Mr. Vohra, and those who defend his statements, do not acknowledge how disgusting they seem to the general public. But it is undeniable that the instinct to protect one's children is both visceral and primal. It is willfully blind to deny how offensive Mr. Vohra's comments are, and to deny that they shut down conversation with non-Libertarians and the Libertarian-curious. Few people will get past the first clause to hear the "but" qualifier.

Accordingly, the affiliates are suffering a real and measurable impact on their attempts to grow their parties. We are fielding unnecessary objections regarding pedophiles in the party. If we cannot grow out parties because roadblocks such as this being tossed our direction, then we are wasting our time at the local level. People are quitting. Mr. Vohra's words have consequences.

Further, this argument is illustrative of attitudes that plague the Libertarian party and drive women away. Women are not just about children. But protecting our children is a significant part of many women's lives. Women do not only care about sexual assault. But the entire country has finally woken up to the fact that sexual assault is a problem that most women worry about and many women have or continue to face.

When the Ivory Tower discusses social issues that it has never experienced in a way that countermands and belittles those who do experience them, those well-meaning philosophers lose credibility and are insulting.

As Oliver Wendall Holmes once said, "The life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience... The law embodies the story of a nation's development through many centuries, and it cannot be dealt with as if it contained only the axioms and corollaries of a book of mathematics." Political parties are the organizational embodiments of social structure and the root of lawmaking. The Libertarian Party looks out of touch and ineffective when it devolves into theoretical discussions that fail to recognize the real harm done to children by sexual abusers.

As women, we can tell you that the comments coming from Mr. Vohra, as a representative of the Libertarian party, is so far beyond the mainstream, and so contrary to unquestioned values of human decency, that our family and friends think we should not be attending Libertarian events, and that we should leave the party. We face ridicule for associating with a party that does not appear to have our interests or experiences at heart. Our righteous belief in small government and individual freedom takes a backseat to the cringe worthy fringe issues made prominent by a lack of focus within the party on the things that matter most.

Unfortunately, Mr. Vohra's dogged, and seemingly unending, foray into the topic of pedophilia is not his only misstep. Even while discussing topics actually relevant to voters, Mr. Vohra has been hostile towards middle Americans by targeting school teachers and the military.

This impacts our County affiliate party directly. San Diego has the third largest population of veterans in the country. We have seen people leave because Mr. Vohra has called them or their loved ones murderers. As someone who was in the Navy, and who comes from a family steeped in Naval service over multiple generations, I have seen this happen within my own family. My own mother was teetering on leaving after the military comments and has now left as a result of the pedophilia comments.

All Libertarians, including the county affiliates, rely on our communities to help us with donations and volunteers. But only those with the most exceptional loyalty remain after teachers and the military were viciously attacked, followed by an apparent defense of child rapists.

How absurd is it that Mr. Vohra attacks people like teachers and military veterans, but defends people who have sex with children?

The statements made by Arvin Vohra are indicative of the tone-deaf messaging coming too frequently from the Libertarian party and its representatives. Quibbling over the philosophical details of taboo subjects that horrify Americans is destructive. These subjects are not a unifying message that rallies people to liberty. To be blunt, Mr. Vohra's personal opinions are not more important than the reputation of the party, and all those struggling within it for the greater purpose of liberty. If he cannot set aside his egoistic need to speak in ways that countermand our efforts, then he must not be a representative face of the party.

Some argued that the purpose in bringing up schools and the military is to change people's minds. But you cannot change people's minds with hostility and insults. *The way to change hearts and minds is with tact and love.* If you believe in the moral correctness of the Non-Aggression Principle, you must also understand that kindness, compassion, and humility are at the root of it. You do not point a gun at people and tell them what to do. You also do not shout at them, insult them, and demand that they come to your way of thinking. Positive communication with the public is required to create a voluntary society.

The Libertarian party has suffered enough embarrassment. It is time for Mr. Vohra and his messaging to be publicly disclaimed. For that reason, we urge the Libertarian National Committee to make a clear stand on what is appropriate communication for the party. It is time to end the party's self-destructive tendencies.

The San Diego Libertarian Party, myself, Ms. Bigknife, and Ms. De Forest, strongly urge the LNC to remove Arvin Vohra from his position of Vice Chair and to stop offending the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alicia I Dearn".

Alicia I. Dearn
Executive Chair
San Diego Libertarian Party