An open letter to the LNC,

My name is Hodey Johns. I am a dues paying member of the Libertarian Party and a podcaster for the We Are Libertarians Network. I am writing this letter because I feel like correspondence on the phone, through e-mails, and in social media occasionally gets deluded.

I’ll make the request to the point: I would sure appreciate it if the social media for the Libertarian Party would consider providing a link to the debates. I would like to address the concerns I’ve heard from members so far when it comes to promoting the material. I would also like to present my humble argument for why I think this would be a good idea.

First and foremost, the leading argument we’ve had is due to production quality. While the videos are recorded in 1080p and with a solid system, we are indeed limited by hardware and software from the candidates themselves. If there is a minimum fidelity setting that you would like for both the video and audio, please let me know. I am very willing to make these tech requirements part of future debates, we would just like them spelled out so that (1) we can know with certainty and (2) we both be held to a higher standard for our media.

Next, the issue has been regarding the desire for “earned media.” I understand the spirit behind the rule: We don’t want candidates to be their own media. With a name like “We Are Libertarians,” the criticism that any presidential candidates from the libertarian party are being promoted at all is a warranted concern. We have attempted to skirt this issue by giving all of the candidates the exact same questions and the exact same timeframe. If there is a statement you would like us to make, or a promise not to endorse a candidate, we will comply.

Third, the issue of bias comes up. Again, I have tried to be as transparent as possible in this regard. I called the FEC and make sure each candidate has filed as a libertarian halfway through the debates when this became a concern. I confess I am a human being; there are candidates that I like and others who I, frankly, despise. By adopting this policy, I had hoped to tackle any concerns over my bias. Like the first two points, if this is a concern, give me a hoop to jump through and I will do it.

If there are other issues please let me know.

I must express that I am frustrated with the process. I am going to lay out my case with the hope that you understand this comes from a place where the most important goal is to resolve this issue going forward.

It is hard to watch an Amash tweet, a Church of Satan quote, and a “Silence is consent” statement show up on our social media and hear that these debates don’t meet the standards of even acknowledgment that they exist and are going on currently. I understand, these are not the official LNC debates, you have NO obligation to give them any recognition. But given the other things that are on the party’s YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, it seems like many of these former reasons come off as excuses, as poor production quality, bias, and media for non-libertarians have made their way onto the feed.

I do not want this to come off as “Hey, you’ve made other bad choices, why not make another one!” There are multimillion dollar organizations that dedicate paid teams to social media and they still make mistakes far worse than the few slips that the LP has. Rather, I feel this is a good choice. Acknowledging these debates are taking place helps the message come across.

I will share a story and then wrap up. Coincidentally, our last debate about Criminal Justice took place on the same day as the second Democratic Debate. Someone from Twitter linked our live stream for Facebook on the NBC Twitter for the debate. We broke our record for downloads in a 24 hour period. We had a lot of Democratic eyes on us, hearing the messaging for the first time about the libertarian role of police, prisons, guns, and more.

In all of our unprecedented amount of feedback, we have had no complaints. Not about production quality, bias, unearned media, or otherwise. Though it’s fair to look into those things (I don’t quite have NBC’s budget), the focus was on the ideas presented.

The network got what we wanted. The message is reaching across the aisle. Sure, it helped that the moderators failed and the candidates were laughable. But that just makes the iron all that much hotter. Like you, I want to see a world set free in my lifetime.

I am not reaching out to you today because of personal interest. You could easily set a standard that I can’t reach. And word of mouth has carried us plenty far. Knowing what we know now, we will be providing links to our debates on feeds during this entire election year because of the reach we had. And it will be successful regardless of what you decide.

The reason I ask is because one listener to the Democratic Debates decided to follow our link and listened in. She heard the mainstream Democrats on the stage talking about “kids in cages” which made her upset and rightfully so. But she heard our candidates talking about other kids in cages. In this case, her brother, arrested for possession of a controlled substance, became a “kid in a cage.” And the system has made it so that her brother never been the same since his arrest. She heard the Democrats talk about a couple of changes here and there. When she heard our message, she heard about not just a few good ideas, but a vision that would make it so her brother could have the opportunity to live his best life.

Sharing these debates would help not you, or me, but us reach new audiences in new ways. There’s a lot of minds in cages. I am eager to let them out and look forward to hearing back from you. I hope for a unified response, but do not hesitate to contact me personally.

Thank you for your time and service in liberty,
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