



8100 Wyoming Blvd NE, Ste M4, #341
Albuquerque NM 87113

505-225-1119 | 575-680-3122 | 888-LPNM-NOW

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For Immediate Release

Libertarians Qualify as Major Party in New Mexico

ALBUQUERQUE, NM, June 2, 2017 -- The Libertarian Party of New Mexico announced today it meets the requirements to qualify as a major political party in the state, beginning with the 2018 election cycle.

“Today marks a historic day for the Libertarian Party of New Mexico,” said chairwoman Elizabeth Hanes, “and we look forward to representing the ideals of thousands of New Mexicans who believe in living their lives peacefully and free from government interference.”

The chairwoman reported that Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver and Elections Director Kari Fresquez confirmed in a phone call that the Libertarian party currently meets the criteria for designation as a “major party” and that, assuming the party maintains or increases its voter registration numbers, it will be designated as a major party on the date of the governor’s primary election proclamation in January, 2018.

Major party status means the Libertarian Party of New Mexico will participate in the primary election process instead of nominating its candidates in convention. Hanes said the party is currently identifying potential candidates for local, state and federal offices. The party already has one candidate, Paul Ryan McKenney, competing in the non-partisan race for Albuquerque City Council.

The Libertarian Party is the fastest-growing political party in New Mexico, and the organization estimates the number of registered Libertarians in the state grew by at least 50 percent in 2016, largely due to the historic presidential campaign waged by Libertarian candidate and former New Mexico governor Gary Johnson. The Libertarian Party of New Mexico currently has about 6,000 affiliate members, of which several hundred are “caucus” (dues-paying) members.

“In the past three months, we have started affiliate organizations in Luna, San Juan and Los Alamos counties, due to requests from Libertarians there,” said Hanes, “and the number of people inquiring daily about joining our party has risen substantially over the past year. We had expected perhaps interest in the Libertarian Party would wane after the election in November, but that has not been the case at all.”

The New Mexico Election Code defines a major political party as “any qualified political party, any of whose candidates received as many as five percent of the total number of votes cast at the last preceding general election for the office of governor or president of the United States, as the case may be, and whose membership totals not less than one-third of one percent of the statewide registered voter file on the day of the governor's primary election proclamation....” [1-7-7 NMSA 1978]. The Libertarian Party fulfilled the first part of the qualifying criteria when its candidate, Gary Johnson, swept about nine percent of the statewide vote in the 2016 presidential election. And its current registered voter tally puts it well above the minimum threshold required to meet that element.

“We owe this achievement to the hard work of hundreds of party volunteers who, over several decades, grew the party to its current size,” Hanes said. “Now, having become a major party, we are moving forward with great momentum and a large cadre of volunteers who relish the opportunity to compete in New Mexico politics on a larger stage.”

The Libertarian Party stands for individual freedom and responsibility. In New Mexico, the party advocates defending and expanding civil rights; eliminating government regulations that stifle economic growth; and lowering or eliminating taxes of all kinds. The Libertarian Party of New Mexico also is opposed to any restrictive immigration reform measures and supports the free movement of law-abiding citizens throughout the region.

For more information about the Libertarian Party of New Mexico, visit its website:
<http://www.lpnm.us>.

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