



EVERY VOTER COUNTS:
The 308 Riding Strategy

Report of the Special Committee on Party Renewal

The Special Committee on Party Renewal

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Introduction

Executive Summary

The Special Committee on Party Renewal in fulfillment of its mandate from the National Executive has consulted, studied and recommended on the red ribbon reforms and the 2006 constitution as well as four areas of study:

- the federated structure of the party
- the role of commissions
- the policy development process
- the leadership selection process

The Committee arrived at these conclusions only after extensive consultations with all party bodies, caucus, party members and liberally-minded Canadians. The goals of the committee were to examine all of these areas and create a party that was more democratic, efficient and ready to fight and win the next election.

The 2006 Reforms

The Committee reviewed the recommendations made by the red ribbon report and their implementation since the adoption of the 2006 constitution. As a result the Committee recommends:

1. Streamlining the membership fee administration process by standardizing the portion of the fee that will be shared with EDAs across Canada. (This provision may require amendment to clause 6.3 of the Constitution, and to the membership by-law.)
2. Priority investment in modern, “enterprise” database technologies, with full functionality in membership management (including remote access for EDAs); voter mobilization, finance, accounting and compliance; and other applications as required.
3. The Council of Presidents becoming the central forum for “Liberal University”, and volunteer training and development generally. The Council’s annual event should be strengthened by opening it broadly to other EDA volunteers and party members.
4. A review of party constitutions at the commission, PTA and EDA level, overseen by the Legal and Constitutional advisors, to ensure harmonization with the national constitution, and particularly as it pertains to recognizing the policy development function incumbent on every level of the party structure.
5. A reduction of the size of EDA delegations to biennial conventions from 20 (plus two aboriginal representatives) to 14 (plus two). This would require amendment to section 62 (1) (k) of the Constitution. Demographic proportions should be preserved.

Re-evaluating our Federated Structure

As one of the most discussed elements of our committee’s consultation the federated structure of the party engendered a healthy debate about the way we organize ourselves and how our compliance and legal requirements under the Canada Elections Act are managed. Ultimately it was determined that although administrative functions should be uploaded to the national office, the provincial and territorial branches should retain their role in the governance of the party as well as political organization, election readiness and policy development.

The committee recommends:

1. that the LPC constitution be amended to include guarantees of service from the national office in the official language of choice, and that a policy reflecting these guarantees be adopted by the national executive;
2. that PTAs prepare, within a reasonable period, the plans contemplated in subsection 14 (2) (b) of the constitution;
3. that LPC draw up a “member services policy”, with performance standards reflecting the various categories of services most requested of it;
4. that LPC move to consolidate all financial management and budgeting, including (but not restricted to) payroll, purchasing, contracting, accounts payable and leasing in the national office;
5. that LPC move to annual budgeting for provincial and territorial operations, to be broadly reflective of plans formulated under subsection 14 (2) (b);
6. that hiring in provincial operations be the responsibility of the provincial executives, on consultation with the National Director (or his or her designate). Employment agreements and contracts would be administered by the LPC. This fact should be proposed as a constitutional amendment to the section deemed most relevant by the legal and constitutional advisors;
7. that LPC adopt, as a matter of policy, a “308-riding strategy”, reflecting the objective of organizing and competing in every riding in Canada; and
8. that the LPC Constitution be amended by changing the name of provincial and territorial “associations” to “sections”, and removing the descriptor of “federation” from section 14 (1) in order to reflect the status of LPC as a single, national party.

The Role of Commissions

In examining the role of commissions the Committee sought not to question their value but rather to ensure that the best structures are in place to achieve the purposes and goals that are entrusted to them. Outreach at the local level was determined to be the best way for Commissions to meet their objectives. It was also suggested that greater fundraising to offset their costs should be pursued. For commissions the Committee recommends that:

1. that EDAs be asked to consider adding director positions for the target populations of each of the four commissions as a basis of a locally-grounded, national network for commissions;
2. that commissions reflect on their mandates and supply a report for extensive discussion at the National Executive;
3. that commissions become financially self-sustaining within an acceptable period of time. the national office institute tracking and reporting mechanisms, akin to leadership candidates, for commission-generated fundraising; and
4. that no change to the constitutional status of commissions be proposed at this time.

Policy Engagement

Policy development is one of the often cited areas for why people want to get involved with the party. The Committee determined that both engagement and development of policy has to occur at all levels of the party, that it can be done both formally and informally and that it must be timely and ongoing. The party's change commission is studying this in greater detail and the Committee defers to their recommendations on more specific action. Nevertheless the Committee recommends that:

1. that the Party produce a clear and detailed vision for ongoing policy engagement at all levels of the party between biennial conventions and that that process be effectively communicated to the membership.

Leadership Selection Process

For most of its history the Liberal party has chosen its members by way of a delegated convention. The Committee examined a number of problems with this approach including the costs and the exclusionary nature of this process. Problems relating to the flexibility of this system were also examined. Leadership models from all Canadian political parties as well as the United States and the United Kingdom were explored for possible solutions. The majority of the party members however shared the opinion that a weighted one member-one vote option was the best solution. As a result the Committee recommends:

1. Amending the party constitution to choose its leader based on a weighted, one-member, one-vote preferential ballot system.
2. Retaining the current cut-off period of 41 days.
3. Reducing from six months to five the maximum amount of time, under subsection 54 (3) (b), available to the national executive to schedule a leadership vote
4. Retaining the current formula for biennial conventions (with the previously recommended reduction in the size of EDA delegations)
5. Providing for an emergency provision in the constitution whereby the National Executive could shorten the period of a leadership contest already under way and prescribe the method and format of a vote in situations where a leader needs to be selected urgently and an interim leader is not an option.

Other Notable Suggestions

The Committee also received many other interesting suggestions including the allowing Canadians living abroad to join the Liberal party given they are able to vote in federal elections. The concept of a "registered liberal" was also introduced either as a replacement for or a compliment to the existing membership structure. The Committee declined to make formal recommendations since these issues lay outside of its mandate but asked the National Executive to consider the idea.

Introduction

In 2006, the National Executive of the Liberal Party established the “Red Ribbon” task force over concerns for the Party’s future. Previous attempts at reforming and modernizing the Party’s structure had proven unsuccessful. The legislative framework under which Canada’s political parties must operate had radically changed with the implementation in 2004 of amendments to the Canada Elections Act (“Bill C-24”). The Party had lost an election. Liberals across Canada demanded a more open, democratic party structure. Riding associations were feeling detached from the Party’s decision-making structures. With these challenging facts as a backdrop, the task force responded with a sweeping recommendation for change.

The mandate of the Red Ribbon panel was “to evaluate how the current operational and decision-making structure of the Party can be made more efficient”. The process was driven by the need “to remain competitive as a political body” in the face of tighter administrative and fundraising rules and a changing political climate.

What emerged was a detailed list of recommendations on what the Party should do to adapt to the changing times. Those recommendations formed the basis of the Party’s new constitution, which was adopted at the Montreal convention in December 2006. It is important to note, however, that one of the more significant recommendations -- a proposal to move to a one-member, one-vote system for leadership selection – fell just short of the required two-thirds endorsement.

Two years later, despite notable progress, there is still a feeling that the Party’s structure remains unable to deal with the requirements of a modern political institution. Whether the issue is fundraising, where the Party lags behind its chief rival, or in grassroots organization, where still far too many electoral district associations (EDAs) remain dormant, there is much work to be done.

In his journeys across the country, new Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff heard this message from the Party’s grassroots and resolved to do something about it.

On January 17th, the National Executive of the Liberal Party of Canada, on the recommendation of the Leader, commissioned the Special Committee on Party Renewal to examine the work undertaken by the Red Ribbon task force, the ensuing constitutional amendments adopted at the Montreal convention and their implementation.

The Special Committee was also tasked with the focused mandate of making recommendations in four specific areas, as identified by the grassroots of the Liberal Party. These included:

- ✦ the leadership selection process;
- ✦ the federated structure of the party;
- ✦ the contributions of Commissions to achieving equitable representation in the party and the pursuit of our electoral objectives; and
- ✦ The development of a clear process and tools for connecting grassroots policy development to all levels of the party.

The Committee was given a very tight timeline and the mandate to present their proposed reforms in time for the Vancouver Convention. The Committee has been co-chaired by former LPC National Director Steve MacKinnon and the Hon. Navdeep Bains, PC, MP. Additional members include MP Bonnie Crombie, Senator Grant Mitchell (former Leader of the Alberta Liberal Party), LPC National Policy Chair Joan Bourassa, LPC(O) President Mike Crawley, former National Campaign Co-Chair Nancy Girard and Nova Scotia Liberal and long-time grassroots activist Kelly Regan. Four of the members served on the Red Ribbon task force.

A key lesson learned from the 2006 Red Ribbon panel's experience was that this process of reform had to be more open and accountable. With this in mind, the Committee embarked on its mandate with no pre-conceived ideas and no limits to the scope of discussion. A process was devised in which every Liberal Member, every party body and every liberally-minded Canadian had an opportunity to make their voice heard and have it included in the Special Committee's deliberations. The process was bottom-up and grassroots-driven with the goal of creating a party that would be inclusive, responsive and representative of its members.

The Committee's consultations began in January, 2009, with a deadline for submissions of March 6th. During that time, formal requests for submissions were made to all National Executive Members, Provincial and Territorial Associations (PTAs), Commissions, Caucus and the entire Council of Presidents, including all Riding Association Presidents. The Committee also conducted public consultations through the Liberal website, En Famille (Liberal-only discussion board), Forum Liberalis (open to the general public) and in-person, in cooperation with the Liberal Party's Change Commission (which has concurrently been examining a number of other issues of relevance to the Party's future).

This report is, of necessity, more tightly focused than the Red Ribbon report. Many of its recommendations will urge speedier implementation of the provisions in the 2006 reform. However, some fine-tuning is required.

Therefore, this report is the product of those extensive consultations and aims to provide guidance to the National Executive on the constitutional amendments that should be put to the delegates at the Vancouver convention in May 2009. Our committee believes that rigorous implementation of the existing constitutional framework, coupled with the focused recommendations of this report, will result in a party that is more democratic, efficient, and ready to fight and win the next election. We look forward to working with all our fellow Liberals to renew our great Party.

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Report of the Special Committee on Party Renewal

The Context

Chapter 1: The Context

The Liberal Party of Canada is a national institution. It is a part of our nation's history, its fiber and its achievement. Our party works best when it seeks to represent Canadians in every part of our vast country. That is why the work of renewing this, our great institution, must start with a simple premise – that whatever is required to make the Liberal party flourish across Canada is work that must be done. As Liberals, we are drawn to the notion that the work of building Canada must, of necessity, draw on like-minded Canadians from every city, town and village in the country. As such, we are inspired by the notion that ours must be a truly national renewal effort – a “308-riding strategy”.

The work of modernizing the Liberal Party of Canada goes well beyond changing the Party's structure or its constitution. It will require a shared commitment to the hard work of organization, fundraising, and engagement with the electorate. We must show up everywhere, fundraise everywhere, and organize everywhere. We must commit to restoring links that have fallen into neglect. We must respect the diversity of views and perspectives that exist across Canada. While being confident in our beliefs, we must also be humble in our approach. As one member put it, “we should always be looking to improve our level of communication, take advantage of new technologies, and not be afraid to hear from our members”. Canadians everywhere must be invited back to the Liberal Party of Canada.

Now, as in past years, Canadians of like mind and common purpose will join us in our endeavor. The Liberal Party is in a battle the likes of which it has not faced in its history. Our opponents are well-funded and well-organized. They have not faced the same need to renew their structures as a result of recent political and legislative developments. While public opinion polls reveal the beginnings of a resurgence in popularity of the Party, this will not translate into electoral victory unless and until we have provided ourselves with sufficient resources and organizational heft to compete effectively on an ongoing basis, and in particular, in general elections.

At present, many of the Party's Electoral District Associations (or “EDAs”, formerly referred to as “riding associations”) are poorly organized, and some are near dormant. While a number of initiatives are underway to revive EDAs and rebuild the Party's presence in areas where we are considered weak, progress will require time, effort, dedication and finances, the latter of which remains a particular area of concern. Many have called for the implementation of a 308-riding strategy, to breathe new life into the party in ridings where we have not traditionally competed to win. In a world of per-vote subsidies, this is a challenge that the Party must embrace. No vote is a wasted vote.

In the aftermath of Bill C-24, the Liberal Party has been out-fundraised by its main opponents, the Conservative Party, by a 4 to 1 margin. In the past twenty-four months, the Conservatives have raised \$28 million more than the Liberal Party, or over one million dollars more in gross revenues per month. This magnitude of gap affects the operations of the Party at every level. Among the serious competitive disadvantages we face are the following:

- ♦ needed investments in database technologies;
- ♦ fundraising list development;
- ♦ political field organization;
- ♦ pre-writ advertising;
- ♦ grassroots policy development;
- ♦ outreach to cultural communities, community groups, and issue-based organizations;
- ♦ volunteer outreach; and
- ♦ Training.

If our main opponents can dedicate four to five times the financial resources to each of these critical areas as we do, it is easy to deduce the likely implications. The Conservative Party's heavily-funded National Office has no financial impediments to acquiring equipment, including sophisticated computer software for voter and issue tracking, and hiring staff to support such strategic tools. They already pay many people to churn out negative material aimed at our Leader and our Party. They spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on frivolous lawsuits intended both to drain us of money and limit our free speech. They are able to spend millions more dollars on pre-campaign advertisements – at times when no legislated spending limit exists.

Our Party has thousands of loyal, dedicated and very engaged volunteers. But, most of these fine individuals are also busy earning a living, just like the average Canadian whose interests we seek to represent in Parliament. To compete with our main rivals, we need a team of paid, professional staff on the job constantly. At the moment, we are seriously out-staffed and out-resourced.

For most of the past century, we were able to win elections on the basis of broad public support and substantial corporate donations. With the ever-growing influence of advertising and new media, as well as the emergence of a significant community of right-wing special interest groups, the broad public support that we have relied on for so long is more easily eroded by our significant resource disadvantage with our main opponents.

Unfortunately, our members, including our local executives, have not sufficiently adapted to the new fundraising environment where corporate donations are banned and large donations are capped. As was pointed out “we all know that traditionally our members haven't been asked to donate”. More members need to donate and more supporters from outside our Party membership need to be sought out and turned into donors. In the past 12 months, we have made progress on this front. The launch of the Victory Fund in June 2008 was an important step. Now, thousands of party members are donating both to their EDA and to LPC on a monthly basis. It is worth noting that the EDAs that have worked the hardest to market the Victory Fund have enjoyed the greatest success – they have found that their members are quite willing to donate. If the lessons learned from these early successes are employed in EDAs across the country, we can easily add tens of thousands more monthly donors, providing a much-needed stable source of funding for the Party.

Even assuming success in our goal of achieving substantial growth in Victory Fund donors, we – as a Party – need to take a closer look at how we spend our money. A close, and open-minded, scrutiny of every aspect of our operations is required if we are to re-position ourselves as an effective organization capable of fighting a winning a campaign against a heavily-funded opponent. In this regard, the Party's constitutionally mandated structure and processes must be re-evaluated in an open-minded manner as we seek to maximize the political return of every dollar we spend.

Now more than ever, we believe it is time to pull together as one and work together to strengthen the party's core. The time for action is now. We have found among Liberals an enormous appetite for change, a will to challenge old assumptions, and a commitment to put the “shoulder to the wheel” in pursuit of a pan-Canadian alternative to a deeply-flawed government.

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**Reviewing the
2006 reforms**

Chapter 2: Reviewing the 2006 reforms

The 2006 reform process, led by the Red Ribbon Task Force, involved a sustained, and unprecedented, effort to reach out to Party members. A series of online dialogues were held prior to the December 2006 convention. During these sessions, Party members were invited to discuss and debate some of the more groundbreaking ideas with the Party's National President. Task force members fanned out across Canada to discuss reform with Liberals in meetings large and small. Ultimately, this effort at inclusiveness proved successful.

In 2006, Liberals voted for sweeping modernization of our party structure, by overwhelmingly passing the party's new Constitution. Now, it is time to set about achieving true culture change within the Party. The Party has been slow to implement the 2006 reforms. If our committee has one overriding plea, it is that the Party becomes focused on implementing both the spirit and the letter of the 2006 Constitution, notably:

- ✦ making EDAs the center of our political action, and focusing volunteer energies on fighting to win in every riding in Canada;
- ✦ leveraging our decentralized structure, and especially provincial and territorial infrastructure, to support all EDAs in achieving a minimal, basic level of political organization
- ✦ proceeding aggressively and efficiently with the implementation of national membership and the attendant database technologies;
- ✦ making the Council of Presidents a locus of training and volunteer development;
- ✦ fostering a "culture of engagement" by committing to policy development at every level of the party, and especially in EDAs, on an ongoing basis; and

True to our mandate, we have chosen to systematically review the work of the Red Ribbon task force; in light of the numerous formal and informal submissions we have received in the course of our consultations, to inform our recommendations and observations on the implementation of the Party's new structure. In this section, we will review each of the task force's 2006 recommendations.

Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 of the Red Ribbon Panel's 2006 Report dealt with the introduction of a national membership, with common eligibility criteria, a common national fee, and open access, at all times, for any person wishing to become a card-carrying Liberal. While this long-overdue change was included in the new Constitution, progress toward a fully functioning national membership and attendant database was seriously hampered by lingering, differing viewpoints amongst provincial and territorial associations (PTAs) and by the wide disparity in the manner in which PTAs managed their existing membership lists. Our role is not to ascribe responsibility or blame, but given the existence of a functioning, if rudimentary, national membership registry at the time of the 2006 convention the long delay in embracing the possibilities of a national membership is noteworthy. Although to be fair it was always understood that the complex membership changes required were never going to be easy.

We are informed that the negotiations regarding the division of the membership fee between the Party's constituent bodies were particularly challenging and, in the end, a resolution was approved by National Executive where the allocation of fees vary from one PTA to the next (LPC takes a common share of each standard membership fee to cover administrative costs, but the division of the balance of the fee between the PTA office and the EDAs varies across the country).

This patchwork of revenue distribution is truly wasteful. The administrative work-arounds and staff time required to distribute scarce dollars is unhelpful. Thankfully a common national membership fee has been adopted but a national approach to the sharing of fees should be established, consistent with the role envisaged for the national office and the PTAs in the next chapter.

Similarly, implementation of modern database technologies has been slow. We note the recent momentum in adopting new voter mobilization software, and its attachment to the membership and voter databases. However, full, “customer relationship” database technologies have not been implemented including integration of back-end financial and compliance applications. While it is certainly not our objective to prescribe detailed I.T. solutions in this area, it must be noted that the Party lags years behind our competitors in this critical department. The Liberal Party requires - immediately - an “enterprise” solution to database and financial management, and aggressive automation of business and financial processes. We urge the Party to invest heavily –and rapidly - in this area to ensure technological parity with our opponents.

Recommendation 4 called for the removal of an archaic clause that stipulated that, except in extraordinary circumstances, only PTAs and EDAs could communicate with party members. This recommendation was included in the new Constitution and Party members are now regularly updated on the activities of the Leader, the caucus and the national executive. Needless to say, the party will want to continue to explore more and better ways to achieve meaningful, two-way communication directly with its members, on issues that affect them, and in the official language of their choice.

Recommendation 5 suggested responsibility for membership by-laws should be the responsibility of the National Executive, following an appropriate phase-in period. With the observation that this by-law took some time to achieve, we look forward to a period of stability as the Party rolls out its first truly national membership program.

Recommendations 6 through 10 dealt with the question of the federated structure of our Party. It was suggested that the mandate of PTAs should include: organization and policy development in their region; representing their region to the national Party; implementing national programs and initiatives in their region; and developing, in concert with their members (EDAs), an organizational strategic plan on an annual basis, which would propose activities in the areas of membership recruitment, finance/fundraising, policy development, EDA compliance, EDA organization and development, administration of Party elections, and election readiness.

The Red Ribbon Panel also recommended that PTAs (through their Presidents) should form the core of the new National Executive and that PTA Constitutions should be amended to reflect this new arrangement. These proposed changes were all adopted as part of the new Constitution. As a result, PTA presidents now make up over 50% of the national executive, and collectively wield great influence over the Party’s management and decision-making.

We will deal more specifically with PTAs in the next chapter. We do note, however, that many of the PTAs have failed to file budgets or the strategic plan called for in the Party’s constitution. This is not solely the fault of the PTAs and was something that was never requested by LPC. At the same time, LPC failed to assume its role to consolidate administration, as mandated in the constitution, leaving most administrative responsibilities in the hands of the PTAs which were supposed to be re-orienting to fieldwork. . There is a concern shared by many Liberal members that the core elements of the new PTA and LPC mandate in the 2006 constitution have fundamentally not been fulfilled. However, there are a number of examples where PTAs have been ahead of the national office in service delivery. (BC, for example, has championed an innovative approach to providing centralized financial services to ridings.) The committee believes that the decentralized nature of the Party can be a source of competitive advantage, if properly oriented, which we will explain in greater detail in the next chapter.

Recommendations 11 through 15 essentially called for a revamped committee structure, including the abolition of all existing (at the time) standing committees and creating: a “revamped and strengthened” Policy Committee; a National Revenue Committee and a Management Committee of the National Executive; a permanent National Election Readiness Committee; and, from time to time, a National Campaign Committee constituted in consultation with the Leader and empowered to run the national campaign and expend money according to a budget approved by the National Executive. These proposed changes were part of the new constitution and the relevant committees are in place.

We believe that this newly streamlined committee structure will serve the Party well over the long haul, and the principle of tight party/caucus coordination will continue to be of paramount concern. The Policy and Platform Committee’s work, as

we will explore in an upcoming chapter, is of particular importance to all party members, and much vigilance is required to ensure that it be allowed to continue to grow into the Party's central forum for fostering a "culture of engagement".

Recommendation 16 sought to require a minimum of 50 members for a commission club to be accredited. The previous requirement had been for 10 members. This passed in an amended form, with the requirement reduced from 50 members to 25.

Recommendation 17 suggested that commissions cease to exist once Party members, at Convention, determine that they have completed or fulfilled their mandate. This recommendation was not included in the reforms presented to the delegates at the 2006 Convention. However, the NWLC does have a provision requiring it to report on progress in achieving equal participation of men and women at all levels of the Party. If a convention deems that such equality has been achieved, the Women's Commission could be deemed to have completed its mandate. We will discuss commissions in an upcoming chapter.

Recommendation 18 set out the membership of the streamlined National Executive, proposing to reduce it from 64 members to 22 members. At the 2006 Convention, the proposal was amended to add a Membership Secretary and to ensure that each territory had their own representative (rather than one selected from among the three). As such, the National Executive now has 25 voting members.

This reduction in size has been positive for the Party. National executive meetings used to be prohibitively expensive and, by virtue of the numbers involved, unwieldy. The new structure is far more apt to generate meaningful discussion and better decision-making. Efforts to "re-grow" the national executive should be resisted.

Recommendation 19 dealt with the composition of the newly-established Management Committee. The proposal passed with a minor amendment and the NMC meets four times annually and now exercises, on a delegated basis, some of the decision-making authority of the National Executive. This is a flexible arrangement, however, a recent Governance Report from the National Executive recommended that the National Executive continue to be the main decision making body for a number of reasons including the representation of the PTAs on that body.

Recommendation 20 required that the Leader be a voting member of the Management Committee and attend at least half of the Committee's meetings. While now constitutionally enshrined, the reality is that a Party leader's schedule is such that compulsory attendance, even for half the meetings, presents a considerable challenge. The Leader has typically ensured that a representative attends the Management Committee on his behalf, though this representative is not constitutionally permitted to exercise the Leader's vote.

However, we do believe that the Leader's presence in the formal decision-making body of the Party is a positive thing. His or her presence at management committee meetings is one way of achieving this. We continue to urge that the Leader deploy all necessary means to be acquainted with the day-to-day issues facing his or her party.

Recommendation 21 proposed the composition and mandate of the Revenue Committee. The section passed, but was amended to add representatives from each of the territorial associations, in order to be consistent with the representation accorded to provincial associations.

Given that participation on the Revenue Committee implies a commitment to fundraising, the broad provincial and territorial nature of the committee is positive.

Recommendation 22 laid out the proposal for the Council of Presidents. Among the duties recommended to be included in its mandate were responsibility to review and consider: the annual strategic, organizational and fundraising plans of the Party and each of the Commissions; the election readiness plans of the National Campaign Committee; the policy development plans of the Policy Committee and its subcommittees; and the by-laws related to the National Membership Registry, such as fees and procedures. It was proposed that the Council of Presidents meet annually, as a "stand-alone" in one year and in conjunction with Biennial Conventions in the next. Logically, its meetings were to

coincide with one of the two meetings of the National Executive (and one of the four meetings of the Management Committee) to be held each year.

It was hoped that the Council would provide a useful forum for the Leader to outline his or her plans for the future and, perhaps most importantly, allow representatives of every single EDA to be consulted on, and gain knowledge of, all of the policies and procedures of the Party. It was also hoped that meetings of the Council – which were to be open to all members of the Party (without the right to vote, of course) -- would, of themselves, become catalysts for activity in the Party and in EDAs, including imposing deadlines and accountability on all Party entities and helping build greater cohesiveness, and enhanced unity of purpose.

While the groundbreaking proposal to create a Council of Presidents was part of the package of amendments that were endorsed at the Montreal convention, the Council of Presidents has yet to become thoroughly integrated in the Party's decision-making. We do note that, while the Council is formally a decision-making body with constitutional powers, its benefit, both to the Party and to those included in its structure, is informal, and provides tangible benefit. An annual event with such a broad-based group of Liberals must become a signal event in the party's annual calendar. It offers the possibility to gauge the "mood of the Party" on a plethora of issues.

What's more, the Committee believes that the Council of Presidents should become the locus of training and volunteer development in the party, and the central forum for "Liberal University". The job of EDA president is a time-consuming, often complex task. By investing in training and exchange of best practices through the Council, the Party will be investing in its volunteer resources for years to come.

Other parties around the world arrange spring or summer "academies" for their most engaged volunteers. We propose that the core function of the Council of Presidents be in providing training and assistance to EDA executives in areas such as fundraising, compliance, technologies, organization, event management, and so on. We also note that the constitution specifically allows for the attendance of any party member at meetings of the Council. This means that council members should be encouraged to bring along other interested party members, potential candidates, and others to Council meetings.

The Council of Presidents can emerge as a singularly potent motivational and unifying feature, distinguishing us from our opponents. We urge that it be fostered as a meaningful, but informal, annual "family gathering", where Liberals meet to build a stronger party and exchange ideas and knowledge. Properly executed, the Council will reduce or eliminate communication gaps with LPC, create a common culture and set of objectives, and strengthen Liberal ties from coast to coast to coast. As such, it is an essential feature of a 308-riding strategy.

Recommendations 23, 24 and 25 dealt with the proposed establishment of an ongoing Policy and Platform Development Committee and Recommendation 26 proposed a sub-committee called the Political Policy Strategy Committee. The Policy and Platform Development Committee, led by a Chair elected at Biennial Conventions, a Vice-Chair appointed by the Leader and with up to 28 other members, and including caucus and PTA representation, has become a very active presence in the policy development process.

Despite that, and the establishment of a Caucus Accountability Officer -- whose mandate is to report to the Council of Presidents and to Biennial Conventions on the consideration of Party policies by the Parliamentary wing of the Party and to relate the platform to the Party's policy development efforts -- there are still many who argue for a platform development process which better reflects the views of grassroots Liberals. The mandate of the Political Policy Strategy Committee is to draft and present a comprehensive annual plan for policy development to the Council of Presidents. We deal with this issue in a later chapter, as will the Change Commission in its report.

Recommendation 27 of the Red Ribbon Panel was intended to ensure that the Leader has an ultimate veto over the policies that he/she is asked to carry into an election and defend as Leader of the Party. As such, it proposed the establishment of a "policy approval" subcommittee of the Party, comprised of the President, the two National Vice-Presidents, and the Policy Chair.

This is a key provision for a political party. It ensures that our Leader has put his or her personal approval on party policies, and represents a validation of the policy processes of the Liberal Party.

Recommendation 28 proposed that the policy development function be included as a formal part of the constitutional mandate of all Party entities, including EDAs, Commissions, PTAs and the LPC itself. While this is now reflected in the LPC constitution, it is unclear how extensive this philosophy has been adopted by other party entities.

We recommend that the Legal and Constitutional advisors to the National Executive initiate, either themselves or through others, an audit of the constitutions of other party entities to ascertain how extensively the harmonization of policy development objectives has progressed. More generally, we believe that an in-depth review of party constitutions to ensure compatibility is probably in order, given the extensive reform undertaken at the national level.

Recommendation 29 proposed increasing the size of EDA delegations to LPC Conventions to 20 and electing 2 Aboriginal delegates from within EDAs. Though the Red Ribbon Panel proposed no change to ex-officio eligibility, in the constitutional amendment that was passed, former Members of Parliament and Senators were added as eligible ex-officio members.

Achievement of full attendance of EDA delegations of up to 22 persons for biennial conventions is probably an unattainable objective. Consistent with a recommended move to a one-member, one-vote leadership selection method, our committee recommends that the size of EDA delegations to regular biennial conventions be reduced (back) to 14, plus two eligible aboriginal delegates per EDA. The demographic proportions of EDA delegations should be preserved.

Recommendation 30 proposed to change the method for selection of a Leader by moving to a one member-one vote (OMOV) selection process. Delegates to the convention were offered a choice between the “status quo” delegated system and a “weighted one member, one vote” method of leadership selection. The proposal narrowly failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority. Since that time various groups within the Party have continued to advocate for OMOV. This issue is explored in a later chapter.

Recommendation 31 proposed to streamline the leadership review process by removing the “double vote” and requiring an automatic leadership review only after an electoral defeat. The proposal was accepted as part of the package of amendments and is now in our Constitution.

This was a positive change.

Recommendations

The Special Committee therefore recommends, after reviewing the implementation of the 2006 reforms, that priority attention be given to:

1. Streamlining the membership fee administration process by standardizing the portion of the fee that will be shared with EDAs across Canada. (This provision may require amendment to clause 6.3 of the Constitution, and to the membership by-law.)
2. Priority investment in modern, “enterprise” database technologies, with full functionality in membership management (including remote access for EDAs); voter mobilization, finance, accounting and compliance; and other applications as required.
3. The Council of Presidents becoming the central forum for “Liberal University”, and volunteer training and development generally. The Council’s annual event should be strengthened by opening it broadly to other EDA volunteers and party members.
4. A review of party constitutions at the commission, PTA and EDA level, overseen by the Legal and Constitutional advisors, to ensure harmonization with the national constitution, and particularly as it pertains to recognizing the policy development function incumbent on every level of the party structure.
5. A reduction of the size of EDA delegations to biennial conventions from 20 (plus two aboriginal representatives) to 14 (plus two). This would require amendment to section 62 (1) (k) of the Constitution. Demographic proportions should be preserved.

EVERY VOTER COUNTS:
The 308 Riding Strategy

Report of the Special Committee on Party Renewal

**Re-Evaluating our
Federated Structure**

Chapter 3: Re-Evaluating our Federated Structure

No topic has engendered more discussion during our committee's consultations than the role, and existence, of provincial and territorial associations as a feature of our party's structure.

It must be pointed out that our party's federated structure grew out of a formal affiliation of provincial Liberal parties across the country. While informal, but tight bonds continue to exist across Canada between provincial Liberal parties and the Liberal Party of Canada, the formal ties (in all but the four Atlantic Provinces) have been severed. In place of provincial parties, PTAs have been created over the years (most recently in Saskatchewan). In another age, these PTAs were essential to the functioning of the Party, especially by managing the membership processes, and providing a provincial coordinating function.

However, several critical and recent changes in the national political landscape have caused the PTA structure, and the federated nature of LPC, to be called into question. First, the Canada Elections Act does not recognize entities other than national parties and EDAs for the purposes of compliance. Thus, financial transactions, fundraising and other previously shared functions must, according to law, now be performed and reported by LPC alone. Second, our competitor parties have constituted themselves as national parties. In the case of the Conservative party, it is made constitutionally explicit that they shall operate only as a unitary (non-federated) national party, with no provincial affiliations or wings. Third, modern technologies and administrative practices have made redundant the need for a loose, decentralized administrative structure. Finally, the creation of a national membership removes from PTAs their core historical function.

The 2006 reforms envisaged a new role for PTAs. Specifically, the Constitution now confers upon them a role as follows:

14 (2) Each PTA is responsible for:

- (a) organization and election readiness and policy development in its province or territory, for representing its province or territory to the Party nationally and for implementing national programs and initiatives in its province or territory;
- (b) developing on an annual basis, in concert with the members of the Party in its province or territory, a strategic plan for its province or territory that proposes activities in the areas of membership recruitment; finance and fundraising; policy development; EDA compliance; EDA organization, election readiness and policy development; administration of Party elections (including a Leadership Vote, a Leadership Endorsement Ballot, candidate selection meetings and delegate selection meetings); and election readiness;
- (c) communicating regularly with its members and with the public in its province or territory in connection with the provincial or territorial affairs of the Party.

14 (3) Each PTA must have a constitution that is consistent with this Constitution and that:

- (a) incorporates the principles set out in the Preamble and defines its purposes in a manner consistent with Section 2 and Subsection 14(2);

...

The years since the adoption of these provisions have seen a paucity of strategic plans, as envisaged in subsection 14 (2) (b). As observed in the preceding chapter, a thorough review of PTA constitutions is no doubt in order to ensure compliance with subsection 14 (3) (a). And it is an entirely debatable prospect whether all of the PTAs have been accountable for organization, election readiness and policy development in their province or territory, as foreseen in subsection 14 (2) (a). Put succinctly, one can easily come to the conclusion that some PTAs have failed to live up to their new constitutional obligations, and that the transition from administrative and membership functions to a more proactive

organizational role has been slow. It should be noted that the transition of the PTAs from an administrative role to an organizational one was based on LPC consolidating administrative functions which has generally not occurred. Several PTAs have been too consumed with administrative duties to begin assuming a more organizational focus while others have struggled to do both.

A significant number of submissions received by the Committee called into question the continued need for PTAs. Many submissions pointed out that the federated structure is “terribly out of date and works against efficient modern Party Organization”. Many Liberals, riding volunteers, and others questioned the wisdom of spending such large amounts on entities which, to them, provided little benefit, and in some cases (again in their view) served to constrain two-way dialogue with the national party. In their view, “PTAs only add a level of bureaucracy and blur the lines of communication and accountability”.

PTAs themselves expressed frustration that they were expected to assume additional responsibilities but were not being relieved of any of their administrative responsibilities. Others felt that they were fulfilling their organizational responsibilities even if their activities were not reflected in a formal strategic plan.

To be clear, the Committee believes that PTAs have made valuable contributions. Indeed the staff and executives of PTAs have often led the way despite a lack of direction and proper communication from the national office. In fact many PTAs share the belief “that appropriate services to support these functions have not been provided”. Thus the failure of PTAs to fulfill their roles is equally shared by the national office. It is therefore the responsibility of the national office to ensure that no matter what changes are adopted, that their capacity for service delivery is strengthened and that the knowledge and expertise of the PTAs is not lost. This is especially true in terms of providing services in both official languages.

One thing that is certain is that PTAs have continued to represent a huge cost center for the Party based on the current decentralization of administrative functions. Fully 25% of all base Elections Act funding is transferred to the PTAs. The PTAs also receive 25% of the net fundraising revenue from everything except direct mail/e-mail. Significantly, the LPC(Q) has also benefited from large, incremental one-time grants from the party, mainly for debt reduction. Taken together, these expenditures mean that the financial disadvantage with our principal opponents is compounded, as they have no such transfers to provincial or territorial entities. Such expenditures can no longer be justified to maintain administrative, coordinating, or membership functions in the provinces and territories, especially when these functions can be centralized at much lower cost, and of uniform quality. Liberal party financial resources simply must be put to better, more effective use.

It is clear that PTAs have hard-working staff and volunteers who make every attempt to be responsive to requests for assistance, and generally do their level best to provide services and a coordinating function for EDAs and Liberal volunteers in their jurisdiction. The very culture of the Liberal party has grown out of a decentralized decision-making structure. It has attracted volunteers from every part of the country, and remains a source of competitive advantage vis-à-vis our opponents.

While we believe that PTAs have been slow to take up their vital (new) duties, the fact that administrative burdens have not been assumed by LPC is, in part, responsible. For several reasons we do not believe that provincial and territorial structures should be abandoned. We believe the Party continues to benefit from provincial and territorial involvement in our decision-making structures. Members have repeated this stating that “it is important that we recognize the importance of the regional representation structure of the party”. We believe that provincial offices provide a vital focal point for Liberal activity in their respective provinces. It is for these reasons that we suggest that the nature of our federation be once again revised to conform with the exigencies of modern politics, but that provincial and territorial structures remains as a key feature of our overall structure.

That said, we do not wish to make such a recommendation without reflecting on other feedback from Liberals with respect to the operations of the national headquarters. If we could categorize the views of Liberals with respect to their

skepticism about granting further responsibility to the national office, it would be filed under “customer service”.

First and foremost, the presence of personnel able to offer assistance and services in both official languages, for every nature and level of inquiry, is essential. It is simply not possible to ask Liberals to forego service in the official language of their choice. Further, ironclad (constitutional) guarantees around language of service are required.

Second, the capacity of national headquarters to offer direct service to members and volunteers must be carefully nurtured. It is entirely natural that LPC, having essentially served only PTAs as “customers” for so long, lacks a broader culture of service and responsiveness. “The LPC has, for example, been poor at issuing tax receipts in a timely manner” although, it must be said, this has improved with time. Therefore, much doubt exists as to LPC’s capacity to respond to member issues with the intimacy and knowledge deployed by PTAs over the years. Careful attention must be paid to nurture a customer (member) service culture at the national office. In fact, it is an essential part of the bargain in transferring responsibility over membership and administration to the national party.

With these issues in mind, we have spent much of our committee’s time deliberating on the appropriate role for provincial and territorial structures. We have examined the interaction between political parties and the Canada Elections Act. And we have reflected on the new responsibilities conferred on PTAs by the constitution.

Far too much time, money and energy is spent inside our party administering the sums of money that changes hands between PTAs and LPC. Separate audits are performed, which in turn need to be consolidated, to deal with our compliance requirements. Expenditures must be consistent with legal requirements. It is for this reason that we recommend that the National Executive cause LPC to fully assert its prerogative and responsibility to be the sole contracting, payroll and central financial entity in the party. Spending authority can still be delegated but they must be managed in keeping with financial standards and expenditure controls established by the National Executive. This relevant authority may be found in the following subsections of the constitution:

69 Financial compliance bylaws

In consultation with the Council of Presidents, the National Executive may make any bylaw in accordance with the procedure set out in Section 26 to establish financial reporting and internal control requirements to ensure compliance with federal law.

AND

71 Property

- (1) The National Executive holds, as property of the Party:
 - (a) any gift made to the Party;
 - (b) any gift made to an officer or officeholder of the Party in the course of service to the Party;
 - (c) any revenue raised by the Party from any source;
 - (d) any account in a financial institution in the name of the Party;
 - (e) anything purchased with any revenue or gift, or exchanged for any property of the Party;
 - (f) copyright in any material or publication either:
 - (i) produced at the expense of the Party; or
 - (ii) contributed to the Party by the original creator of that material or publication;

- (g) any right or benefit conferred on the Party;
 - (h) anything else that would be generally recognized as being the property of the Party in accordance with ordinary commercial conduct.
- (2) The National Executive must establish policies for the acquisition, maintenance, insurance, management, use, and disposal of property of the Party.
 - (3) The National Executive may establish a corporation incorporated under the federal laws of Canada or the laws of any province or territory of Canada for the purposes of holding and managing the property of the Party.

AND

72 Debt and credit

- (1) The National Executive may:
 - (a) borrow money on the credit of the Party;
 - (b) pledge any property of the Party as security for any debt, goods or services; and
 - (c) pledge the credit of the Party in exchange for goods or services.
- (2) The National Executive must establish policies:
 - (a) regulating the undertaking of debt and pledging of credit;
 - (b) regulating the liquidation of debt; and
 - (c) limiting the total debt of the Party.
- (3) The Party is not responsible for election or other debts incurred by any Constituent Body, or by any candidate, unless the National Executive has given prior written authority for that debt.

The Party must begin to fully act as the sole and central compliance, budgeting, purchasing, accounts payable, payroll and financial administration center of the party. This will mean that, subject to delegated financial authority that LPC staff will oversee and execute all payroll and benefits activities, contracts (including leases), supplier management, and budgeting. Budgets would, of course, continue to be approved and monitored by the National Executive but delegated authority would allow provincial entities to manage their allocations within the established expenditure controls.

The Party would set annual budgets for activities in each of the provinces and territories, according to plans proposed by members, EDAs and the duly-elected provincial executive in the relevant jurisdiction.

To be clear, the LPC's national office must be (and legally already is) the sole manager of budgets, assets, revenues and expenditures of the Party. Should further amendment to the constitution be required to clarify this fact, we strongly urge that such amendment be proposed. It is simply too great a risk, under the current legislative regime, to allow such a dispersed expenditure management system.

Ultimately these changes are about legal compliance, obtaining economies of scale and eliminating administrative duplication. The Committee envisions the reformed PTAs as becoming the regional organizational hubs that were intended in the 2006 constitution. This is where the strength of PTAs lies and where their talents are best employed.

The 308-riding strategy

Having been unburdened of all administrative responsibilities, PTAs would be free to fulfill the strategic political responsibilities conferred upon them by the constitution. This leads us to the critical element which has gained currency in the Party, that of executing on a “308-riding” strategy to restore the Party to a minimal level of organizational effectiveness in every riding in Canada.

The committee believes that substantially all of the monies currently expended on the operations of PTAs be re-profiled in favour of, as the constitution already sets out, “organization and election readiness and policy development in its province or territory, for representing its province or territory to the Party nationally and for implementing national programs and initiatives in its province or territory.”

The National Executive would set these budgets annually, and money would be deployed, as a basic constitutional requirement, in every province and territory. The regional presence of the party will thus be guaranteed.

Field staff would be engaged in the new sections to begin the work of organization on the ground. (Of course, our existing party staff must be offered the first chance at these organizational (i.e. non-administrative) positions). As a beginning proposition, field staff would assist all ridings to achieve a “base” level of organizational readiness, so that the party could be reasonably assured of having EDAs who have all:

- convened a general meeting at least once every two years;
- attracted a minimum number of members;
- elected a full riding executive;
- elected a policy chair and have planned policy engagement activities;
- delivered an annual riding social event;
- achieved a minimum fundraising target; and
- maintained a basic level of election readiness.

That, as a broad outline, forms the basis of a 308-riding strategy. This plan ensures that we have the staff resources required to support volunteers in every part of Canada to help build their EDA to a minimum level of effectiveness, so that we can begin asking Canadians for their vote, wherever they live. These resources would be supported by provincial and national organizational plans, technologies and a common platform for training, pay and benefits and financial administration.

Since the Committee appreciates the regional sensibilities which our decentralized structure provides, under this plan, regional staff would be hired by provincial organizations in consultation with the National Director of the party (or his or her designate). This would ensure full sanction and support by the provincial body, and maintenance of basic standards of qualification, etc., across the country, as well as employment accountability to the national office.

To reflect the ongoing decentralized structure of the party, and to ensure full participation by all provinces and territories, no change to the current decision-making structure of the Party is suggested.

However, to more fully reflect the status of the LPC as a national party, and the requirement of its constituent parts to act in service of the national party, provincial and territorial associations would be renamed as “sections”, and the party’s status as a federation would be removed. Obviously, this new role and status would entail constitutional amendment. The mandate of sections, as reflected in section 14 (2), would remain unchanged. However, section 14 would be renamed as “Organization” and section 14 (1) would be amended by withdrawing the word “federation” and by renaming

associations as “sections”. It is important to note the new Provincial and Territorial Sections would retain the same names and governance structures of their predecessors.

The committee believes that the foregoing recommendations more clearly delineate the responsibilities of the provincial and territorial organizations in the party, while creating greater obligation on the part of the national office to member services. The committee feels strongly that the Party must dedicate itself to building our organizations in every riding in the country, and that a decentralized structure akin to that currently in place is the best way to achieve this.

Therefore, the Special Committee recommends:

1. that the LPC constitution be amended to include guarantees of service from the national office in the official language of choice, and that a policy reflecting these guarantees be adopted by the national executive;
2. that PTAs be directed to immediately comply with their constitutional responsibilities by preparing, within a reasonable period, the plans contemplated in subsection 14 (2) (b) of the constitution;
3. that LPC draw up a “member services policy”, with performance standards reflecting the various categories of services most requested of it;
4. that LPC move to consolidate all financial management and budgeting, including (but not restricted to) payroll, purchasing, contracting, accounts payable and leasing in the national office;
5. that LPC move to annual budgeting for provincial and territorial operations, to be broadly reflective of plans formulated under subsection 14 (2) (b);
6. that hiring in provincial operations be the responsibility of the provincial executives, on consultation with the National Director (or his or her designate). Employment relationships would be administered by the LPC. This fact should be proposed as a constitutional amendment to the section deemed most relevant by the legal and constitutional advisors;
7. that LPC adopt, as a matter of policy, a “308-riding strategy”, reflecting the objective of organizing and competing in every riding in Canada; and that the LPC Constitution be amended by changing the name of provincial and territorial “associations” to “sections”, and removing the descriptor of “federation” from section 14 (1) in order to reflect the status of LPC as a single, national party.

EVERY VOTER COUNTS:
The 308 Riding Strategy

Report of the Special Committee on Party Renewal

**The Role of
Commissions**

Chapter 4: The Role of Commissions

Since their inception, commissions have sought to play a constructive role in helping the Liberal Party of Canada better understand and represent important segments of Canadian society. By promoting and representing the views of their groups, commissions “play an important role in bringing our attention to issues that may be overlooked by the majority of members. Not because the majority does so on purpose but simply because they do not see the issues from a minorities point of view and may not even be aware of the difficulties a policy may trigger”. They have allowed the Party to hear from those whose voice may not otherwise make it through traditional channels.

The goal of our committee’s study of commissions is not to question the value of that contribution, but rather to ensure that the best structures are in place to achieve the purposes and goals that are entrusted to them. The question is therefore not whether Commissions have a valuable purpose or potential, but whether they are able to reach it, as they are currently constituted. While our constrained financial circumstances mean that all expenditures must be properly focused, the lens through which we analyze their role is not financial. These groups represent important segments of our Party and of our potential voter support. The effectiveness of Commissions is important to our ability to attract and represent them as members, and to earn their support during an election.

The four currently constituted commissions of the Party represent important targeted groups within our overall membership and within Canadian society. Aboriginals have a unique place in Canadian society, and have very low participation rates in the political process overall. Seniors represent many of our most dedicated volunteers, and continue to have the highest turnout rates in elections. Women are a core voter support group and, while progress has been made, we remain far from achieving the goal of equal representation in the House of Commons and the Party hierarchy. Young people hold a lot of potential for growth for the Party, and attracting members in their youth can earn the Party a supporter and volunteer for years to come.

Ultimately, our commissions are a means for representation of and outreach towards these important segments of Canadian society. While the current four groups are critical for the Party, it must be recognized that other equally important groups are also under-represented. The Liberal Party is the party of multiculturalism, yet our effectiveness at reaching out to, and connecting with, cultural communities has diminished, especially in comparison to the Conservatives who have made extraordinary efforts to target these communities in the past few years. We need to re-double our efforts to engage cultural communities in order to deliver the message that the Liberal Party has been, and will always be, the Party that best protects minority interests. Similarly, better representation of rural Canadians is key to the Party’s future growth. And, as the Party that legalized same-sex marriage, many members would like a stronger representation of Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered (GLBT) Canadians. Some also feel that a stronger voice is needed for physically and mentally-disabled Canadians.

That said, it is clear that, from a financial and organizational perspective, adding commissions for all of these important, under-represented groups is simply not practical. Given the current financial constraints of the Party, providing funding and staffing support to new commissions is not possible at this time. Expansion of the National Executive and of provincial and territorial executives would also be costly and complicated. The mirrored structure of commissions would create a more complicated overall Party structure that could detract focus from core political objectives and activities. The addition of new commissions would add to concerns that the ability of the Party to speak with one united voice would be further diluted.

It should also be noted that, in years past, the Party has suffered from the introduction of a vast number of “paper clubs”, or commission clubs established with the primary purpose of acquiring delegate spots in leadership conventions. Outside of any leadership period, these phantom clubs conducted very little business of any political value. Indeed, they all too often appeared in advance of leadership contests and disappeared afterwards. In recent years, with the introduction of more stringent standards, the number of “paper clubs” has decreased significantly. It can be anticipated that the number of such clubs will decrease further with the possible adoption of a one member, one vote leadership selection

process. Nonetheless, it is important to recall that it was at a time when leadership contests were the primary driver for the growth of clubs that the standard for accreditation was set fairly low and that, in reality, the standards have changed only marginally: currently, to become -- and remain -- accredited, a club must have 25 members and hold an annual general meeting. The actual activity level of the clubs is not measured, and can vary widely. While some clubs may work closely with their local riding association, others have no connection.

As we seek renewal of our party, it is appropriate to re-examine the standards and the methods that are used to achieve our outreach objectives with respect to these target groups. In doing so, we must be mindful of the balance that should be struck between seeking to promote grassroots activity and wanting to avoid the creation of inactive clubs or the maintenance of largely dormant clubs.

Many members of the party feel that the current structure of commissions can lead to too much focus on their power and position in party hierarchy at the expense of pursuit of the mandated political objectives. As one member put it, “commissions tend to concentrate their activities on maintaining their place and influence through numbers as part of a power structure, as opposed (to) acting as a bridge between the party and their (the commissions’) constituents”. Rather than working within the party to best achieve their mandate, a more adversarial type of approach has tended to develop, one which is too often evidenced by competing, rather than shared, interests. This is what has led the Special Committee to be given a mandate to review the role and objectives of Commissions.

The Current Situation

The commissions currently mirror the federated structure of the Party. Each has an executive made up of national officers, including a president or co-chairs, and PTA presidents. PTA presidents sit on their provincial executives. Local representation is achieved through clubs. The Young Liberals of Canada (YLC) currently have 56 accredited clubs, the National Women’s Liberal Commission (NWLC) has 34 clubs, and the Senior Liberals’ Commission (SLC) has 5 clubs. The Aboriginal Peoples Commission (APC) has chosen to not have clubs.

As noted above, the number of clubs for all commissions has been declining. There is currently a challenge of interest and engagement of members for some commissions. Many of the Commissions have been in existence for some time, yet still struggle. The APC does not have presidents in many provinces, and have very low participation rates for their executive meetings. The Seniors Commission, which has been in existence for the shortest period, has not yet attracted significant numbers of seniors as participants in commission activities and many presidents report a lack of interest. The 38 clubs currently recognized by the NWLC are concentrated in Ontario and the Atlantic, leaving many areas of the country without an “on the ground” resource to support women candidates.

Party members who fit a commission’s membership criteria automatically become members. Any member under the age of 26 is a Young Liberal. All female members are members of the NWLC. All aboriginal Liberals belong to the APC. Similarly, those 65 and over are automatically members of the SLC. However, if only a small number of the members of the Commissions become actively engaged, this puts into question the legitimacy of their representation of their members within the rest of the Party. The automatic memberships and indeed the existence of the Commissions has to be clearly communicated to members in order to engage and involve them.

Local Outreach

It is widely acknowledged that outreach happens best at the local level, in the riding. The knowledge and connections necessary to recruit and support credible candidates is most often found at the riding level. Without local structures in place, it is very difficult for commissions to attract new members, and give them a role to play in the Party. Where such local structures exist, commissions are usually far more successful at meeting their respective objectives than in areas

where they do not. Similarly, effectively gathering the views of their members is next to impossible in a structure with little direct connection to the base. Without strong local connections throughout the Party, commission executives at both the PTA and national level may effectively end up representing only their own views, or the views of their fellow executives, rather than those of the broader population of members of their group.

As mentioned above, the local connections for commissions are clubs. Keeping in mind the primary objectives of commissions -- i.e., a means for representation of and outreach towards important segments of Canadian society -- it should be acknowledged that it is at the local level where our efforts to achieve these objectives will make the greatest difference for the party.

A more effective organization could be that targeted outreach to specific groups becomes part of the mandate of each riding association, where appropriate. With this in mind, each riding executive could include a number of Outreach Directors, each with specific responsibility for a targeted segment of the riding's population -- for example, a Director of Seniors' Outreach, a Director of Women's Outreach and a Director of Youth Outreach. In ridings with aboriginal populations of 5% or more, or where there are reserves, there could be a Director of Aboriginal Outreach. These Commission representatives can serve to connect their EDA to the work their Commissions are doing and avail themselves of their support. Representatives on EDA executives could also be added to target other groups, where numbers warrant. For example, a Director of Multicultural Outreach should be responsible for outreach to local cultural communities. Ridings in agricultural communities could have a Director of Rural Outreach. In ridings with significant gay and lesbian communities, a Director of GLBT Outreach could also be established.

Each of these EDA representatives would be able to network locally, regionally and nationally to develop strategies and discuss best practices. Rather than have a separate "club executive" at the local level, a smaller group of those occupying these positions could form working groups or executives both provincially or nationally to identify needs and best practices, and coordinate activities and feedback. In order to support the increased activity at the EDA level, the National Office should identify a resource person responsible for assisting the grassroots activity. As an example, support could be given by the national office to allow for online discussions and sharing of documentation and resources. Provincial or national coordinators for outreach to these groups could ensure that a description of their role, effective strategies, brochures, and other necessary resources are provided.

Separate working groups could be established and made responsible for developing policy submissions for their groups and a mechanism for direct consultation should be developed for these groups to contribute their knowledge to provincial and federal election readiness strategies.

Clubs or committees could still be established at the local level, with club presidents being, by default, the riding's director of outreach for that group. Consistent with a move to a one member, one vote culture within the Party such clubs would not be given delegate spots or require a formal accreditation process. Their purpose would be to enact and organize local strategies for outreach to their groups and link to policy committees to help provide relevant policy ideas whenever possible.

The APC and the NWLC also work to recruit and support aboriginal and women candidates, respectively. As part of the 308 riding strategy, stronger local organization for the Commissions would better allow them to identify candidates and organize for their nomination. The best way to get a nomination remains selling memberships, and organizing locally. While letting the provincial and national election co-chairs know of strong candidates is also important, they should also be included in their riding's candidate search committee when possible.

The YLC focus is different than that of the other commissions, however. While they should be active in the riding during an election, their primary work takes place mainly in campus clubs. Many of their members may not be living in their home riding, and would prefer to focus their efforts on recruitment and activity on campus. Campus clubs serve as an important recruitment tool for bringing young voters into the party, where they will hopefully remain for life.

Mandate

While their own bylaws may differ, the LPC constitution outlines similar purposes for all commissions. Each commission may accord different levels of importance to their purposes, and some find that what they see as the primary purpose is not clearly defined in the LPC Constitution. For example, while the NWLC feels it must offer “opportunities to discuss issues of concern, mentor, network, and build critical policy-making and advocacy skills for women”, the Seniors Commission might put a different emphasis on its priorities. A “one size fits all” mandate for all Commissions may not be appropriate. Mandates should be reconsidered and focused on the one or two priorities that are most important for each Commission.

Policy

Policy development is an important aspect of all commissions’ work, which provides an important resource for the Party. Aboriginals, women and seniors are the best positioned to develop policies that meet the needs of their groups. The Young Liberals have been the source of some of the Party’s most innovative policy resolutions. The commissions, with the possible addition of other groups, should maintain their ability to submit policy resolutions to the national process. If the policies were forced to come through riding associations and then flow upward through PTAs (or their successors), they may lose out to those that appeal to more people.

Each commission could establish a policy working group comprised of the riding outreach directors most interested in policy development. The working group would be responsible for soliciting policy resolutions from the relevant outreach directors across the country, and organizing the group’s submission. Online mechanisms for interaction are available and their use should be encouraged.

Fundraising

While fundraising to support commission activities is a constitutional requirement, only the Young Liberals Commission has done so in any noteworthy way. Although it should be noted that due to inconsistent tagging of revenues, the Woman’s Commission may be responsible for a larger figure than they are given credit for.

Many commissions have had challenges fundraising, or have not yet made major efforts to do so. While the donation limits make fundraising more difficult, as any money raised by the commissions goes against a donor’s LPC contribution, the YLC’s successful efforts have shown that it is not impossible for commissions to raise funds.

However, if commissions are to begin seriously working on fundraising, specific requirements and targets must be set. A phased-in requirement to fundraise for their activities would allow commissions to plan and to understand their requirements. The goal would be to create a culture of fundraising for commission members and lead to them becoming financial self-sustaining.

As mentioned, some commissions have expressed concern that current accounting practices at LPC mean that commission fundraising is not tracked or recognized. While commissions can informally track this information themselves, LPC’s Finance Department must be able to properly track any donations that are directed to or raised by the Commissions. It is also important to recognize that Commissions don’t just contribute to the party in terms of money but also the time and dedication given by their members.

As many commission members are new to fundraising, and may not feel they have the knowledge or best approach to getting started, support should be given from LPC’s fundraising department to develop a comprehensive annual fundraising plan. Similar assistance should be given to the independent boards of the Judy LaMarsh Fund and the Aboriginal Electoral Endowment to aid in their own efforts.

Therefore, the committee recommends:

1. that EDAs be asked to consider adding director positions for the target populations of each of the four commissions as a basis of a locally-grounded, national network for commissions;
2. that commissions reflect on their mandates and supply a report for extensive discussion at the National Executive;
3. That commissions become financially self-sustaining within an acceptable period of time. the national office institute tracking and reporting mechanisms, akin to leadership candidates, for commission-generated fundraising; and
4. That no change to the constitutional status of commissions be proposed at this time.

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**Engagement
(Policy)**

Chapter 5: Engagement (Policy)

Our committee has heard loudly and clearly, as did the Red Ribbon task force in 2006 that Liberals want to be involved with policy formulation. There exist examples of successful policy engagement throughout our party, and in other parties all over the world. Further, the existence of technology-driven engagement tools provides the party with low-cost, easy alternatives to expensive in-person meetings.

The committee believes that citizen and member engagement in our policy processes – formal and informal – holds the key to solving our fundraising and member recruitment challenges. Liberals, and ordinary citizens, expect to be given a forum to express their views. They wish to be heard. Then, and only then, will they give more freely of their time and their money. They seek to belong.

When we open the doors of our party to varying opinions, we will have disagreements. We must be honest with each other, and with the public, about those disagreements. Yet, disagreement is in the very nature of political parties. People come to political parties, not because they see policy development as a zero-sum game where only their views must be reflected in party policy. Rather, they tend to arrive with an open mind and sense of compromise that animates most citizens. As one association put it, “grassroots members don’t expect to get their way on every issue. But they do expect to be listened to on each issue”.

At the time of formation of our committee, the National Executive had already created the “Change Commission”, which has been tasked with the broader question of equipping the party for the large challenge of policy engagement, among other questions. It is therefore not our objective to create a parallel set of recommendations in this area. In fact, our close collaboration with the Change Commission leaves us with the utmost confidence that they will come up with a cogent set of proposals complementary to our own.

The committee does believe that a clear, understandable process of member engagement must begin soon after the May 2009 convention, and continue throughout the period between conventions. This process must also be clearly communicated to the membership is imperative.

We are certain that the Change Commission will provide very useful guidance in this regard. However, we have taken the liberty of offering up some principles of policy engagement that should be taken into consideration.

- Policy development and engagement must occur at every level of the party.
- Engagement must not always be formal; it can be informal.
- Engagement must not always lead to written decisions (or resolutions) – the best processes offer leaders a clear picture of where party members sit on a particular issue, providing valuable input.
- Engagement must be timely and ongoing.

We applaud the Party for the successful implementation of “en Famille”, the members’ website, which has been so instrumental to us in consultations for this report. We urge the Party to use this powerful tool, and tools like it, as we move forward, in the process of opening up the party to honest policy discussions, and yes, even to disagreements.

Despite our endorsement of technology, the Committee believes that discussing ideas in person is still critical to a fulsome policy debate. The Committee therefore recommends continuing delegated policy conventions but believes that the high number of delegate spaces which were created in the interests of a leadership contest should be reduced in anticipation of the adoption of a one member, one vote system for leadership. The recommendation made in Chapter 3 is designed to address this, and would assist the National Office in its organizational responsibilities by reflecting the realities of attendance at a policy convention without a leadership component.

Therefore the Committee recommends:

2. That the Party produce a clear and detailed vision for ongoing policy engagement at all levels of the party between biennial conventions and that that process be effectively communicated to the membership.

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**Leadership
Selection**

Chapter 6: Leadership Selection

For most of its modern history, the Liberal party has chosen its leaders by way of delegated conventions. Put simply, delegates from each riding are elected at special meetings and then travel to a leadership convention to vote. The candidate who garners the majority of delegate votes at the convention becomes party leader. However, two factors—one a challenge and the other an opportunity -- have given cause for a serious reconsideration of our traditional approaches. The challenge is the very high cost of bringing thousands of delegates together in one location. The opportunity is the one presented by technological advances that allow the possibility of broad-scale participation of grassroots members of our Party.

A critical issue -- more relevant now than ever, but always an issue -- is cost. Becoming a delegate is not cheap. Delegate registration fees run around \$1000 and, when accommodation, meals and transportation expenses are taken into account, the total cost for a delegate is typically between \$2,000-\$3000. For most party members, the financial outlay required serves as a significant disincentive to becoming a delegate, a problem which is then compounded by the resulting skewed representation of the Party's membership at the convention. For the grassroots member, it doesn't matter how much time you've volunteered to build the Party, the bottom line is that if you don't have the money, you're not going to have a voice at the convention. Our challenge, then, is to find a cost-effective means of selecting a leader.

Fortunately, a cost-effective and truly democratic method is readily available. The principle of democratic representation can be extended to its ultimate limit by providing a direct vote to every member of the party using currently available technology. Our committee received many submissions attesting to the need to ensure the process used to select the leader is representative of a majority of members. Many expressed the sentiment that, "we must move to a one member one vote system of leadership selection". Success in generating broad appeal will assist not only in ensuring party solidarity but will also provide the successful candidate with some much-needed experience at connecting with average citizens, a necessary life-skill for any political leader seeking to convince Canadians that they should be the next Prime Minister. The way we select a leader should therefore reflect the democratic values that the Party itself champions and ensure that those who hold its highest office are as broadly representative of the membership as is possible.

In considering possible solutions, our committee studied the leadership selection processes used by Canadian political parties, as well as those used in the United States and the United Kingdom. The Committee also received extensive feedback as part of its consultations and heard many opinions on the matter. Some suggested keeping the current system, arguing that "the delegate system is the worst way of electing a leader...except for all the rest". Others suggested a US-style primary system or hybrid model. The majority of the submissions, however, called for the adoption of a One-Member, One-Vote (OMOV) system. The reasons for this are clear: members believe that "the more democratic we are, the broader our membership reach can be", declaring that "nothing else is supportable". In fact, some members believe that "...the delegate process as it stands today is simply wrong. To have a stake in the Liberal Party means to be part of all the processes, not a bystander, and choosing the leader by popular vote of the party is one part of being a member". While a version of the OMOV system was one of the major recommendations of the 2006 Red Ribbon task force, the proposal was narrowly defeated by delegates elected to attend the last biennial convention. As many pointed out, a particular challenge when seeking passage of such a significant amendment to our traditional approaches is that we are asking delegates – those very people who are most motivated, and financially able to attend a convention – to put an end to the practice of delegated leadership conventions.

Some concerns over an OMOV system include the risk of "...exacerbating the geographic concentration of the party" and being targeted by special interest groups. This has happened in the past and the Committee studied a few examples, including the experience of the Nova Scotia Liberal Party. In Nova Scotia, a straight OMOV system resulted in regional blocs dominating the process, which effectively shut out candidates from outside those areas. This may have led to an atrophying of riding associations and a sense of disengagement in the membership.

Recognition of this potential drawback to a pure one member, one vote system led many members to assert that the “the fairest system would be a weighted one member one vote”. In such a system, every riding association is assigned an equal amount of points (e.g. 100) that are allocated to a leadership contestant based on the percentage votes received from party members in that riding. The contestant who ultimately achieves over 50% of available points nationally becomes the Leader of the party.

As with the current system, it is likely that more often than not, an individual candidate would not secure more than 50% on the first ballot. Under an OMOV system, in order to avoid prolonged periods (or rounds) of voting, a single transferable ballot could be used. Such a ballot would allow members to rank their selections. As the votes are counted, the last place candidate is dropped out of the race in each round and the ballots of those who supported the candidate who is dropped from the contest are redistributed according to the next most preferred candidate indicated by their supporters. In this manner, a transferable ballot ensures that a majority of support is achieved. This eliminates concerns of regional dominance and gives an incentive for leadership contestants to mount a truly national campaign.

One of the benefits of OMOV is that a leadership vote can be conducted without the need for an expensive convention. All members of the party who meet the necessary criteria can vote on the Internet or over the phone. This means that a vote could be organized in a relatively short amount of time and that there is a clear mechanism for consultation and selection in situations where it is necessary to choose a new leader quickly.

This flexibility is a key feature of OMOV.

We have considered the “loss” of a full-blown leadership convention that can, and sometimes does, provide momentum for a new leader. However, with careful management, mitigating measures can be put in place. These can include local or regional gatherings where Party members have the option to vote and listen to broadcast speeches and/or coverage, an extensive series of debates, and other measures. While this flexibility exists under the current constitution, a constructive dialogue around these potential courses of action should serve to alleviate the concerns of some that we would lose the media impact that gatherings of Party members can generate. Indeed, if locally or regionally-organized gatherings do occur, the media impact around a leadership vote could be significantly magnified.

Finally, an OMOV system allows for far more flexibility in timing. While the provisions for choosing an interim leader are clear and necessary, a national executive may wish to abbreviate a leadership process far more than would be possible in a delegated process. In fact, the OMOV system allows the Party to consider dramatically reducing the amount of time between the creation of a leadership vacancy and the contest to fill it. The committee believes that for normal circumstances (i.e., not in an emergency situation), this time frame should be reduced to five months (from six), plus the 27-day period required to establish the rules, etc., for the contest. This period of time continues to allow for a cut-off period of 41 days (as currently contemplated) and a lengthy membership recruitment period. However in an emergency situation, the National Executive should have the power to shorten and modify the format of a leadership vote in situations where a Leader needs to be elected quickly and an interim leader is not an appropriate option.

The committee believes that the Leadership Vote committee must have the maximum flexibility in using technological or other innovations in preparing an OMOV contest. It is in this spirit that we do not propose to prescribe a specific form or method of voting.

In conclusion, the committee believes that the most democratic and effective manner of selecting a leader is through a weighted one-member, one-vote, preferential ballot system. It is an essential part of a 308-riding strategy, where we say to every Liberal member that their vote counts, regardless of where they live.

Therefore the Committee Recommends:

1. Amending the party constitution to choose its leader based on a weighted, one-member, one-vote preferential ballot system.
2. Retaining the current cut-off period of 41 days.
3. Reducing from six months to five the maximum amount of time, under subsection 54 (3) (b), available to the national executive to schedule a leadership vote
4. Retaining the current formula for biennial conventions (with the previously recommended reduction in the size of EDA delegations)
5. Providing for an emergency provision in the constitution whereby the National Executive could shorten the period of a leadership contest already under way and prescribe the method and format of a vote in situations where a leader needs to be selected urgently and an interim leader is not an option.

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**Other Notable
Suggestions**

Chapter 7: Other Notable Suggestions

The nature of the Committee's broad and extensive consultations were such that Liberal members could not help but occasionally stray from the mandated areas and suggest other potential areas for investigation and reform.

One of the most interesting proposals was to allow for Canadians living abroad to be able to become members of the Liberal party. Currently there are more than a million Canadians living abroad who are ineligible for party membership despite the fact that they retain the right to vote in federal elections. This represents an enormous pool of untapped supporters who should be given the opportunity to participate in the Liberal Party.

Another proposal that provoked interest was the concept of "Registered Liberals" similar to the idea of registered Democrats or Republicans in the United States. The thinking behind the proposal is that the concept of membership alienates people who would otherwise donate and participate in a political party but don't like the sense of obligation that the word "member" entails.

In another iteration, it was proposed that "Registered Liberals" would form a second-tier of membership and allow Canadians to register their interest in the Liberal Party and gain access to information but reserving voting rights for paid members. In both proposals it was suggested that there would be no cost to becoming a "Registered Liberal".

The Committee encourages the National Executive to investigate these proposals more thoroughly, possibly using the Council of Presidents as a vehicle for study and consideration. It does not however make any formal recommendations since these proposals fall outside of the Committee's mandate.

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Conclusion

Conclusion

The committee wishes to thank all those who took the time to prepare submissions, participate in discussions (both in-person and online) and who gave freely of their views to committee representatives. Our experience has been a heartening one – there exists a true passion, in every corner of this country, for the renewal and rebuilding of our great national institution.

We have benefited greatly from the wise counsel of LPC staff and the individual experiences of committee members. We believe profoundly in our work, and that the compromises we have achieved will add value to the already-exciting possibilities offered by the 2006 reforms.

We cannot stress enough how much of the work has been done already. The 2006 reforms are sound and reflective of modern political management principles and the democratic traditions of our Party. We cannot help but wonder how much more progress could have been made had more attention been given to their implementation following the 2006 convention.

We thank President Doug Ferguson and the National Executive for conferring this mandate on our group. While time-lines have been tight, our work has been deliberate, consultative, and open.

We look forward to continued participation in the renewal of our great Party.

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**Appendix A:
Consultations**

Appendix A: Consultations

Despite our tight timelines, the Committee conducted extensive outreach in an effort to engage all party members and liberally-minded Canadians on party renewal.

Summary of Outreach:

- Letters and calls requesting feedback and input: Caucus, National Executive Members (PTA Presidents and Commission Presidents), Riding Association Presidents
- Online: En Famille and Forum Liberalis Threads
- Emails and voice mail drop sent out to all members
- Renewal Section on the Liberal Website
- Presentations made to the National Executive, Young Liberals, LPCO, Caucus, Aboriginal Commission, Seniors Commission, Manitoba Liberals, BC Liberals, Saskatchewan Liberals, Quebec Liberals, Women's Commission, Nova Scotia Liberals, Alberta Liberals, Policy Committee, Halliburton Riding Association, PEI Liberals, Newfoundland Liberals, New Brunswick Liberals.

Summary of Feedback:

- 250 emails received
- 50 formal submissions
- 398 En Famille submissions
- 50 Forum Liberalis submissions
- 18 in-person discussions and teleconferences
- 8 Pre-study meetings of the Renewal Committee
- 5 Meetings of the Renewal Caucus

The Committee would like to recognize all those who made a submission to the Committee. This report is based on those ideas and without your input renewal would simply not be possible.

Party Bodies:

Aboriginal People's Commission, Aboriginal People's Commission (Ontario), Alberta Liberal Party, Calgary Centre-North EDA, Halliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock EDA, Kingston and the Islands EDA, Lethbridge EDA, Liberal Party of Canada (Ontario), Liberal Party of Canada in British Columbia, Liberal Party of Canada (Manitoba), National Women's Liberal Commission, Nepean Carleton EDA, Nova Scotia Liberal Party, Ontario Women's Liberal Commission, Ottawa Vanier EDA, Palliser EDA, Saskatchewan Liberal Association, Senior Liberals Commission, West Vancouver- Sunshine Coast-Sea-to-Sky-Country EDA, Yukon Territorial Association, Young Liberals of Canada

Individuals:

Adrian Ludwin, Alan Johnston, Alan Scobie, Allen Mitchell, Andrew Kania MP, Andrew Sally, Anna Muselieus, Bill Moses, Bob Cameron, Bob McMarron, Brendan Read, Brian Appel, Brian Graff, Bryndis Whitson, Caprice Barbour, Carol Williams, Carrol Bell, Catherine Kallin, Chris Drew, Chris Slothouber, Christina Dawn Monroe, Cindy Waters, Corey Dahl, Daniel Arnold, Darlene Albert, David Valentin, Don Thompson, Donald Symonds, Doug McDonald, Douglas Brydges, Dr. Jagdish Khatter, Drennan Rod, Eric Harrison, Ernie Lustig, Gareth Hitchings, Gary Scherling, George Hodgson, Glenn Wagner, Greg Meinnis, Hon. Hedy Fry PC MP, Hervé Rivet, Hugh Helferty, James Hanna, James Reeb, Janet Collins, Jaskaran Sandhu, Jason Cherniak, Jay Fedorak, Jean Louis Tanguay, Jean Proux, Jeffrey Silvester, Jennifer Abbot, Jim Kane, Joan Spice, Joy O'Donnell, Karem Allen, Karen Gansel, Kelsey Hanaan, Kyle Peterson, Lawrence Kashat, Len Hinds, Linda Schultz, Lynne Steele, Marjorie Bruce, Mark Redmond, Mark Watton, Mary Pynenburg, Masud Sheikh, Matt Slomer, Michael Cayley, Michael Hale, Michael Homsy, Michelle Gairdner, Michelle Simson MP, Murray Soder, Myna Lee Johnston, Palen Dugda, Pat Reavy, Patricia Marsden-Dole, Patrick Barry, Paul Petrelli, Paul Simon Darlaston, Peter Keen, Peter Zankl, Pierre Magnan, Rick Stoszak, Rob McCullough, Robert Oliphant MP, Roland Tanner, Ron Gillies, Ryan Sullivan, Selena Walker, Sen. Sharon Carstairs, Sharon Davis, Shawn O'Hara, Stephen Fitzsimmons, Stephen Jenuth, Susan Everden, Terry Miller, Thomas Sutton, Tracy Muggli, Tristan Roy, Victor Drury, Wayne MacFarlane, Wendy Robbins, William Love, Yasmin Ratansi MP