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# A ROADMAP TO RENEWAL

## OTTAWA 2012 – LIBERAL BIENNIAL CONVENTION

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Alternatives for Discussion  
Among  
Members of the Liberal Party of Canada



This paper has been issued by the National Board of the Liberal Party of Canada (“LPC”) as a basis for wider discussion among and input from LPC members and supporters in the wake of the 2011 election defeat. For more information about feedback sessions, go to <http://convention.liberal.ca/>. Written submissions in respect of the proposals contained in this paper, including suggested amendments to the proposed resolutions, are invited and may be submitted prior to December 1, 2011 to the National Party Office at [Ottawa2012@liberal.ca](mailto:Ottawa2012@liberal.ca). Copies of this paper are also available in French at <http://www.liberal.ca/fr>.

Liberal

## A ROADMAP TO RENEWAL

At our upcoming national convention in Ottawa (January 13-15, 2012), Liberals will be called upon to meet the challenge of rebuilding and renewing the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC). The proposals contained in this document are intended to focus the debate. They reflect the very constructive views and input of many Liberal activists from across Canada working at all levels of the Party, including many non-member supporters and even some disaffected former members and supporters.

The Board's pre-publication consultations have convinced it that, in order to revive our prospects for electoral success, Liberals must take a bold but practical approach in setting the Party agenda for the next four years. In tabling these proposals, our goal is to engage grassroots participation in the development of a clear roadmap to victory for the Party at the next Canadian general election in 2015.

Some of the resolutions we are tabling for consideration are purely directional in nature; others suggest significant reform of the Party's structure and processes. Taken together, the proposed resolutions, if enacted, would result in sweeping constitutional change and radical operational modernization of the Party's affairs.

But these are not decisions that the Board can or should make on its own and nothing is yet set in stone. Our objective is to generate a national discussion throughout the Party and beyond that we hope will challenge the proposals laid out below, foster the sharing of additional ideas and hopefully lead to an even stronger set of proposals that the Board will ultimately present to the Convention for the consideration of delegates.

### 1.1 Major Themes and Priorities

Input to date has converged around six principal themes or priorities that are widely understood by Liberals to be both highly inter-related and integral to the Party's future success. The Board endorses these general statements of direction as follows:

- 1. The future health of the Party depends primarily and directly on the health of its Electoral District Associations (EDAs) and of its provincial and territorial party affiliates.** As a national party, our first priorities must therefore be (i) rejuvenating and rebuilding LPC's inactive or under-performing EDAs with vastly increased grassroots engagement, and (ii) supporting a renaissance of Liberal activism in all provinces and territories, especially those where the Party has been in an extended period of decline;
- 2. The future health of the Party demands that it modernize itself.** As a 21st century party, our priority must be to streamline LPC's central and regional decision-making structures and operational functions within the context of a more efficient federated organization, with a focus on reorganizing the ongoing role of Provincial and Territorial Associations (PTA), strengthening the Council of Presidents (CoP) and breaking down silos of activity between the Leader's office, the National Office and the Caucus;
- 3. The future health of the Party requires it to re-establish a framework of organizational trust.** As a broadly-based, mass participation party, our priority is to revolutionize the top-down and bottom-up transparency and accountability of the entire LPC organization at all

levels particularly in relation to (i) organization and outreach, (ii) fundraising and (iii) policy development and implementation;

4. **The future health of the Party will be dictated by how well it uses technology.** As a party focused on transforming itself from a traditional political institution engaged in brokerage politics into an energized and organized movement of political activists, our priority is to invest heavily in the modernization of the Party's communications and fundraising backbone as represented by Liberalist<sup>1</sup>, including (i) the collection, aggregation and input of a broader and deeper set of voter identification data for both organizational and fundraising purposes, and (ii) the development and training of a new generation of digital fundraisers and organizers/fieldworkers;
5. **The future health of the Party depends on successfully empowering Canadians who are under-represented in Canada's political life.** As a party committed to principles of equity and inclusion at all levels, our priority is to continuously advance the standing and influence of Canadians who are currently under-represented in the Party and in Parliament, including women, Aboriginal Canadians, new Canadians and young Canadians. Our goal is to build a more thoroughly bilingual and multicultural political organization, fully reflective, at all levels, of the Canada of tomorrow;
6. **The future health of the Party will be best secured if we adopt a culture of continuous outreach and engagement.** The future health of the Party will be best secured if we adopt a culture of continuous outreach and engagement. As a party determined to reach out and rebuild its grassroots political base particularly among women, Francophone, Aboriginal, new Canadian and young voters, our priority is to open up and further democratize the processes by which LPC's leaders and EDA election/by-election candidates are selected, by which money is raised for Party activities and through which Party policy is, first, developed and approved by the Party and, second, adopted or implemented by the Caucus.

Reflecting these priorities, the proposed resolutions are designed to accomplish these objectives as part of a radical overhaul of the way the Party operates, communicates and connects with Canadians.

## 1.2 Key Proposals

Based on consultations to date and subject to consultations to come, we are proposing:

### Funding the Party

1. That the Constitution be amended to abolish the National Revenue Committee. The Party intends to proceed with the development of the National Liberal Fund as a professionally managed popular fundraising operation accountable to the Board – a decision for which no resolution from the Convention is required;

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<sup>1</sup> Liberalist is the unified database of LPC and is an adaption of the Voter Activation Network (VAN) system used by the US Democratic Party.

2. That the Convention endorse the decision to build and maintain the “Strong Start” campaign, a special cash reserve for the purpose of promoting and defending its next permanent Leader;
3. That the Convention endorse a special, nationally co-ordinated, all-electoral district fundraising campaign in the spring of 2012 with the sole target of raising funds to enable the Party to make the investments required to fast-track the deployment, population and utilization of its universal database technology (i.e. Liberalist) in support of national and local organization, communication and fundraising efforts;
4. That the Convention endorse the decision of the Party to establish, properly support and enforce targets with respect to Victory Fund and Laurier Club participation in all electoral districts, with such targets to be set in consultation with the EDAs based upon a national goal of doubling participation in both programs in each of the ensuing 3 years by July 1 of each year;

#### Engaging Liberals and Rebuilding the Base

5. That the Constitution be amended to create a new opportunity for engagement with the Party for individuals who do not wish to become full Members of the Party, leading to a new, more open and more flexible framework for active engagement as a Liberal partisan. A “Supporter” will include all Party Members and any person who is prepared to register as a supporter of the Party by affirming a Declaration of Liberal Principles, confirming non-membership in any other federal political party and accepting such other regulations or criteria as may be set out by the Board. A “Supporter” would be entitled to participate in the leadership selection process and the nomination of an LPC candidate in their local EDA as described in sections 7 and 8 below. Only a Member will be able to stand for Party office (including as a nominated Party candidate), vote for Party Officers or participate in conventions as a full delegate;
6. That the Convention mandate each EDA to undertake a comprehensive and nationally-supported voter registration drive in its electoral district between April 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013 to recruit new Members and Supporters;
7. That the Constitution be amended to extend the right to participate in the selection of the next permanent Leader of LPC to all Members and Supporters as defined in section 5, permitting electronic, online and mail-in voting, utilizing either a preferential or run-off ballot system, in the context of an appropriately secured, national voting process that:
  - (i) is staged and phased regionally over a period of no less than 10 and no more than 16 weeks between March 1, 2013 and June 30, 2013;
  - (i) is weighted equally by electoral district;

- (ii) is confirmed by a vote of the Council of Presidents (“CoP”) at an in-person meeting of the CoP in the manner of an electoral college vote;
8. That the Constitution be amended to extend the right to participate in the nomination of LPC candidates for the House of Commons in any election or by-election to all Members and Supporters living in the electoral district, permitting electronic, online and mail-in voting, using a preferential system and a single-vote selection process that is appropriately secured;
  9. That the Convention affirm the principle of requiring all LPC candidates for the House of Commons in any election or by-election to face an open nomination contest in their electoral districts in order to stand for election as an LPC Candidate in any election or by-election, subject to the Board’s right to approve specified exceptions to the rule at the request of and on the recommendation of the Leader;
  10. That the Convention affirm the Party’s decision to maintain a permanent virtual and real-time policy development process accessible to all Members and Supporters of the Party through its website, with management of the process and content delegated to volunteer expert policy working groups to be organized, maintained and supported by Caucus critics, assisted by Caucus staff;

#### **Streamlining the Party**

11. That the Convention endorses a streamlining of Party decision-making and operations as follows:
  - (i) that PTAs embrace a more focused role in terms of providing support and logistics for EDA volunteers in the strengthening and rebuilding of the active membership base and financial health of all EDAs with clear and enforceable targets set in consultation with the Party and with the PTAs;
  - (ii) that the Party immediately review and reconsider all aspects of its budget allocations given real changes in available funding, including but not limited to PTA budgets, the National Office, funding of the Leader’s Office and the requirements of general operations;
  - (iii) that the Party, in co-operation with PTAs, achieve savings in the administration of the Party by centralizing all banking, treasury, accounting and compliance functions in the National Office following a validating cost review of each item and subject to adjustment as practical/applicable to blended PTAs;
  - (iv) that the Party, in co-operation with PTAs, reduce duplication and overlap in its operations by integrating communications (i.e. web, email, telephone), payroll and human resources services to the maximum extent possible following a validating cost review of each item and subject to adjustment as practical/applicable to blended PTAs;

- (v) that provincial and territorial targets for Victory Fund and Laurier Club donors be set and enforced in consultation with the PTAs to more effectively promote fundraising in the regions and across the Party and to establish a basis for accountability for funding allocations;
  - (vi) that the National Director and the Executive Directors/Directors General (Regional Directors) of the PTAs work in concert to provide a single, proposed annual strategic plan for the Party for the review and consideration of both the National Board and PTA Executives, including specific and enforceable deliverables at both the national and provincial/territorial levels;
  - (vii) that the Party and the PTAs give top priority to reviving and strengthening EDAs supported by a strong, integrated and accountable team of national and provincial/territorial field staff. Field workers will report and be accountable to:
    - (a) their Regional Directors; and
    - (b) through the Regional Directors to the National Director specifically with respect to the execution of the Party's strategic plan and the achievement of consultatively established EDA development targets in fundraising, membership and EDA activity generally and, otherwise, to their respective PTA Presidents.
  - (viii) that the Board and all PTA Executives more actively ensure that all operational activities are fully co-ordinated nationally and that each PTA Executive will:
    - (a) contain at least a federal policy chair, a Victory Fund chair and a Laurier Club chair, each of whom will be expected to liaise directly with their counterparts both regionally and nationally and serve as voting (or, in the case of blended PTAs, at least ex officio) members;
    - (b) review and adjust its composition from the perspective of efficacy and redundancy, with redundant positions being eliminated;
    - (c) support local field staff in aggressively targeting and recruiting strong leaders to help revive and/or strengthen EDA's with a view to enhanced candidate recruitment and operational readiness; and
    - (d) support strategic coordination, through the National Election Readiness Committee (NERC) and the National Office, of all election readiness activity on the part of the Caucus, the Party and its PTAs from a common and unified communications platform.
12. That the Convention endorse the Party's decision to appoint a Director of Digital Operations accountable to the Board to oversee the development, maintenance and utilization of the Party's unified communications platform;
13. That the Convention endorse the Party's decision to consolidate and integrate:

- (i) all Party organizational and fundraising data into a single database; and
  - (ii) all technology operations at the National Office of the Party where feasible.
14. That the Convention endorse the Party's decision to fast-track the deployment, population and utilization of its universal database technology in support of LPC's national and local organization, communication and fundraising efforts based on an implementation and investment plan to be approved by the Board.

#### Building Transparency and Trust

15. That the Constitution be amended to require the Board to:
- (a) Table an annual strategic operating plan and budget for the Party for the review and consideration of the CoP annually no later than the preceding December 1 of each year; and
  - (b) Issue an annual report to all Members of the Party, to be posted on the Party's website within 90 days of the calendar year end. The annual report shall (i) contain the audited financial statements of the Party, (ii) an assessment of the Party's performance relative to the Strategic Plan and (iii) detail the historic and comparative financial and organizational status of the Party at each of the EDA, provincial or territorial and national levels (i.e. registered Liberals, Party members, number of donors, amount raised, average donation, attendance at AGM, bank balances etc), including EDA rankings in relation to pre-defined performance scorecards, targets and rankings;
16. That the Constitution be amended to strengthen the role of the CoP as a consultative body and not as a legislative or policy-making body and, specifically, that it play a larger role in relation to (a) the new proposed reporting obligations of the Board, (b) certifying the results of the new proposed leadership selection process and (c) in holding EDAs accountable for non-performance in relation to organizational, fundraising and other targets.

#### Preparing for Victory

17. That the Convention endorses the Party's request that the new permanent Leader of the Party be requested to reconstitute NERC no later than September 1, 2013.
18. That the Convention endorse the Party's request that nominations for LPC electoral district candidates be opened (i.e. the freeze be lifted) no earlier than October 15, 2013.

19. That the Convention endorses the Party's request that the next Biennial Convention of the Party be focuses on the policy and platform of LPC and be held no later than May 30, 2014.

### **1.3 Final Proposals**

**It is the sincere hope of the Board that the proposed resolutions set out above, as well as the process by which they have been drafted and will be finalized for consideration by the Party, will be seen by Liberals everywhere to have met the highest standard of openness, inclusion, accountability and transparency.**

We believe the Convention will be a watershed event, not only for Canadian Liberalism but also for Canada's future as a progressive, compassionate, diverse, bilingual, united and prosperous nation.

We therefore invite all Liberals and all Canadians to join us in this vital discussion over the coming weeks. As we prepare to meet together in person in Ottawa and online across the country during the second weekend of January, we ask you all to share your dreams for Canada and for our Party openly and honestly. Together, we can make those dreams reality.