



A PARTY BUILT FOR EVERYONE A PARTY BUILT TO WIN

THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA'S
RED RIBBON TASK FORCE

REPORT

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August 2006



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FINAL REPORT

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I . EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canada's Liberals have unquestionably built a better Canada and a better world. We can stand proud as a Party. As we look forward, we need to build upon our accomplishments, learn from our difficult times, face our challenges and do it with a renewed focus, energy and enthusiasm.

It is in this context that the Liberal Party of Canada's National Executive established the Red Ribbon Task Force in 2005. The Task Force was mandated to evaluate how the current operational and decision-making structure of the Party can be made more efficient.

The Task Force reviewed the following issues: the primary imperatives of a modern Canadian political party: political organization, policy development, revenue generation and finance/compliance issues; changes to the Canada Elections Act (Bill C-24); the Party's federated constitutional structure; and the Party's current volunteer governance structure, including Commissions, Standing Committees and the National Executive. The Task Force report is submitted and presents recommended constitutional and structural changes that - if approved by National Executive - will be presented to members at the upcoming Convention of the Party in November.

Task Force members acknowledge that our biggest challenge ahead is to remain competitive as a political body. Much has already been done in this regard. We have new Provincial and Territorial Association (PTA) financing agreements; we have established a National Election Fund; adopted a national Code of Conduct; memberships are now available on-line; and we have developed and implemented a National Membership Registry (NMR).

But much more needs to be done. Protecting the status quo is not an option - our current system is not sustainable. Red Ribbon members have also noted some simple - if inconvenient - truths about the challenges we face as a Party:

- *A cumbersome governance structure with some 60 voting members and a Constitution that often prescribes rather than enables;*
- *A highly competitive political and fundraising environment;*
- *The "new normal" political fundraising reality created by our own Bill C-24;*
- *The Conservatives' Bill C-2, which poses substantial administrative and compliance challenges that we will be required to meet according to law.*

*In grasping the challenge of renewal before us, the Task Force targeted three key foundations to success: **policy development, fundraising and finance, and organization and election readiness.** These areas, the Task Force submits, should serve as the fundamental cornerstones of all that we do as a Party. Moving forward with collective purpose, and renewed focus, coast to coast to coast concentration on these primary activities will undoubtedly help to better serve, engage and energize all our members and supporters in political discussion and action. Specific recommendations include the following:*

National Membership: *Everyone should be able to directly join the Liberal Party of Canada. The Task Force therefore recommends that national membership, with common eligibility requirements, will form a common platform for access to the Party, helping the Party to grow across the country. Specific recommendations are included herein.*

The Party as a federation: *The Task Force recommends that the Liberal Party of*

Canada remain a federated structure, and that our Provincial and Territorial Associations (PTAs) will have a larger say in the direction of the Liberal Party. Task Force members submit that our ridings should be viewed as the centre of our Party's universe, and that they should be enabled to play an enhanced role with respect to the Party's core activities of policy development, fundraising and election readiness. Accordingly, Task Force members suggest that PTAs will be freed from administrative burdens, which would allow them to conduct more outreach with EDAs and focus on the above-mentioned priority areas.

Governance: The Task Force recommends a streamlined governance structure that is smaller and better able to draw upon the expertise around the national table. In this context, gone will be most standing committees – the new focus will instead be on policy, fundraising and finance and election readiness as the key operational necessities of a modern political party energized to win. Commissions will continue their good work and their presidents will sit on National Executive. PTAs will be the largest designated group of the Executive. The size of our Executive will drop from some 60 voting members to 22.

Council of Presidents: The goals of the Party and those of our ridings will be shared and acted upon through a new 'Council of Presidents' to be created within our Constitution and involving every riding president. This Council will meet about once a year and will review key operational areas and rules relating to membership. This is another initiative that, if implemented, would strengthen the role of ridings in Party activities across the country.

Policy: The vigour and creativity of policy development and our election platform is the lifeblood of our Party – Task Force members therefore suggest that it is imperative that the policy process be at the heart of our constitutional considerations. By inserting the policy development function at the heart of the structures of the Party, Task Force members believe we will achieve better processes, engagement, and ultimately, electoral success. Therefore, among other recommendations, Task Force members suggest the establishment of a new permanent standing committee dedicated to on-going policy and platform development.

Conventions & Leadership: Task Force members recognize that Party Conventions are the supreme decision-making authority in the Party, and can be the birthplace of great ideas, forums for debate and discussion, and the launch pad for future Prime Ministers. But we also recognize that changes to the related rules and structures need to be made. Accordingly, recommendations include: expanding the size of delegations from our ridings (EDAs) to Party Conventions including aboriginal representation from each riding. Our upcoming Convention in Montreal will also be presented an option on leadership selection, namely between the status quo and a weighted one member, one vote system; and holding leadership reviews only after elections where our Leader did not become Prime Minister.

The recommendations contained in this report are intended to strengthen and empower our Party's grassroots, simplify and streamline our Party's structures, and regroup our efforts around the aforementioned three core functions. We steadfastly believe the choice in front of us is relatively simple: change or become unable to compete to win. Simply put, we truly feel there is a "better way".

The Party, however, belongs to us all. It is now up to Liberals from all over Canada to discuss, debate, and ultimately decide how to best address the challenges before us.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Liberal Party of Canada's National Executive established the Red Ribbon Task Force in 2005. Why Red Ribbon? Simply because the more common "Blue Ribbon" moniker just won't do in the Liberal Party, but also because "Blue Ribbon" somehow connotes a form of stuffy elitism. That is not who this group is. The Task Force is composed of "working" Liberals, from all over the country. A new MP. A new Senator. Four women, four men. All of the Task Force's members, like hundreds of thousands of Canadians, do the real work of political parties: organize ridings, contribute ideas, and offer time and talent free of charge in exchange for the hope of a better country.

We can stand proud as a Party. Together, we have accomplished much and have contributed to the vibrancy of our nation. As a National Party we have worked together; the work of our members, our Leaders and our Parliamentarians has forged policy and directions that have contributed to the growth of our nation. Canada's Liberals have built a better Canada, and helped build a better world.

As we look forward we need to build upon our accomplishments, learn from our difficult times and face the challenges that are before us.

Our biggest challenge ahead is to remain competitive as a political body. We must engage our members in new ways, embrace the changed structural environment of political fundraising and financial compliance and determine how we can best compete to earn the trust of the electorate.

There are very good reasons why the Liberal Party of Canada has been the dominant political party in Canada. Our successes have been characterized by our resolve to challenge assumptions, to be wary of the status quo, and to act on our impulse that there is always a "better way".

The Red Ribbon Task Force herein presents our final report to the National Executive, including its recommendations, for discussion. We have engaged our Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee in assessing what changes might be required to our Constitution as we move forward. As this phase of the work comes to an end, the real work begins. It is now up to Liberals from all over Canada to consider the suggestions we have made, to support, reject or improve them, and ultimately to vote on them. It is a daunting challenge to consider. There is a justifiable pride of ownership of the Liberal Party of Canada that beats in the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Canadians. This pride is the direct result of our democratic traditions and our openness to new ideas. We are counting on these characteristics in making recommendations that must find a high degree of support if they are to be adopted. That means that we will work to find consensus and to present to the members of our Party changes to our Constitution at the Leadership and Biennial Convention in November 2006.

Our President, Mike Eizenga, and the entire National Executive, relying on the Liberal tradition of challenging the status quo, had the vision and the resolve necessary to empower the Task Force to do its work. Mr. Eizenga also contributed mightily to the Task Force's deliberations.

We thank Jack Graham and the Hon. Andy Scott, for their input, and for the work of the Renewal group which Jack chaired and which examined our governance structure. Together, they provided new insights and suggestions.

The dedication and hands-on experience provided by National Director, Steven MacKinnon, in assessing our Party's competitive environment and his clear and concise presentation of the realities we face as a Party formed a basis for the Task Force deliberations. Gordon Taylor Lee has provided research that has been invaluable and has contributed his insight and skill in the drafting of this report.

We look forward to the dialogue that will ensue from this report, and to the excitement of putting shoulder to the wheel and creating "a Party built for everyone, a Party built to win."

Respectfully submitted,

Annie-Claude De Paoli (Co-chair)
Kelly Regan
Sen. Grant Mitchell
Christine Hampson

Michael Hillman (Co-chair)
Shannon Salter
Hon. Navdeep Bains, MP
François L'Heureux

3. MANDATE: RED RIBBON TASK FORCE

The Liberal Party of Canada's (LPC) National Executive established the Red Ribbon Task Force in 2005, although electoral exigencies intervened and the work of the Task Force proceeded in earnest in the spring of 2006. The idea was to engage members of the National Executive and National Caucus, together with Liberals from across the country, in "re-imagining" the Liberal Party in the context of sweeping changes in the legislative and regulatory landscape, to say nothing of the new political realities with which the Party must grapple.

Specifically, the Task Force was mandated to evaluate how the current operational and decision-making structure of the Party can be streamlined and made more efficient. The Task Force was asked specifically to review and consider the following issues:

- The primary imperatives of a modern Canadian political party: political organization, policy development, revenue generation and finance/compliance issues;
- Changes to the Canada Elections Act (C-24);
- The LPC's federated constitutional structure;
- The LPC's current volunteer governance structure, including Commissions, Standing Committees and the National Executive.

The Task Force was asked to carry out its work and report back to the National Executive in 2006, with a view to presenting recommended constitutional and structural changes to the upcoming Convention of the Party.

4. THE CASE FOR RENEWAL

“The status quo in the Liberal Party of Canada is no longer working to the benefit of all members or to the benefit of the Party as a whole... we don’t raise enough money by our current methods to fight national elections, staff our Party, and pay off our debt.”

The above excerpt is as relevant today as it was almost fifteen years earlier, when it was included in “Agenda for Reform”, the July 1991 Reform Commission of the Liberal Party of Canada’s interim report.

The 1991 Reform Commission grappled with the same issues currently being assessed by Party’s Red Ribbon Task Force, including: the need for a more streamlined federation; membership issues; reforms to Commissions and Committees; and a potential overhaul of various aspects of the Party’s infrastructure.

Today, like then, the Liberal Party finds itself with considerable financial challenges, sitting in the Opposition benches, and facing many of the same organizational challenges.

And now, like then, the Party needs to take stock of who we are and how we are structured. Now, unlike then, we do not have the luxury of deferring change and passing up our opportunity to rapidly regroup and present a compelling, streamlined Party as an alternative to the Conservatives.

That is because the political world has changed. We are facing, for the first time since 1984, a united right-of-center foe. The Conservatives used the opportunity of their merger to significantly streamline their organization and reduce the onerous structures that had built up over the years (Importantly, they were also able to adopt a new Constitution at the exact time of – and therefore consistent with – Bill C-24.) On our left, the New Democrats, while failing to renew their orthodox socialist philosophy, have made great strides in becoming a modern political fighting force. The Bloc Québécois has been sustained by the onset of public funding and the unfortunate effects of the sponsorship issue. The Green Party has increased its vote in each of the last three elections.

However, beyond the adjustments made by our rival parties, a whole new competitive landscape has emerged which has made our Party’s structure an impossible one to sustain.

a. C-24: The “new normal”

The most important change in the political landscape was the veritable revolution in financing and compliance engendered by the passage of Bill C-24, Prime Minister Chrétien’s signature election finance reform. This reform is a great legacy for our Party. However, it also requires that we adapt, and in some cases change, to accommodate the new legal realities we face. Even without any other changes in the competitive environment, the realities of the new Elections Act would of themselves require that we make important changes to our structures and administrative processes.

Ironically, while C-24 was initiated by the Liberal government, the Party continues to be in a period of painful readjustment to the new fundraising climate the Bill helped shape. Liberals across the country must realize that failing to fully adjust to this “new normal” will permanently damage the Party.

Cracks in the Party infrastructure - and the C-24 fall-out - are already apparent. Debt is still an issue, even though the Party has performed the “mission impossible” of posting a surplus in June 2006. Our Party’s structure has left us disconnected from members and small-donation supporters, thus greatly impeding our ability to raise money.

It is no secret that, for years, we have been hard-wired as a Party to rely on large donations from corporate donors. C-24 removed that funding source but we have not yet made the structural changes, or fully effected the “culture change”, to a member-focused donation base.

We also continue to lose the overall fundraising battle to the Conservative Party. Some recent statistics illustrate this point: while our Party raised \$6.5M from individuals in 2005 (up from about \$500,000 in 2003), the Conservative Party raised almost three times that. In 2006, numbers provided to Elections Canada showed that the Conservative Party received \$5.6-million from 37,000 contributors in the first quarter of 2006. By comparison, our Party raised approximately \$1.3-million from approximately 6,500 contributors. We have fallen victim to never asking our supporters for money.

Let there be no question – our Party must continue to develop and implement an aggressive grassroots fundraising strategy that engages with members and supporters. Our donor base must grow and be able to challenge the base of other political parties or we will forever fall short on our ability to undertake the hard work of a modern political party.

There is evidence that the Party is making the transition. Individual donations have increased markedly. The Laurier Club has grown in numbers and revenue. But it will take much more than this: we have no choice but to evolve and fundamentally change the way we fundraise at all levels. This imperative is made starker by what lies ahead.

The Harper Government’s Bill C-2, which proposes to ban outright all corporate, union and organization donations, and will impose a new annual contribution limit of \$1,000 for individuals (to each of national parties, Electoral District Associations (EDAs), and leadership candidates), means we must adapt ever more quickly.

The Conservatives claim that this is being done for reasons of “accountability”. However, Liberals should be under no illusion that this Bill C-2 is anything but a blatant attack aimed squarely at our Party’s political jugular. We can, and must, respond.

C-24 did far more than revolutionize political fundraising. It also included sweeping changes to “compliance” with the law, and imposed a huge burden on EDAs and political parties. New, comprehensive laws and subsequent regulations have meant that the Party has had to develop a significantly beefed-up financial, legal and audit capacity.

Anyone who has acted as a local financial agent will attest that the “new normal” means a crushing burden of returns and paperwork. The Party relies on volunteers – unrecognized and noble persons in every EDA - to complete filings. Their work has real value and must be better supported. The Party must continue to work with Elections Canada and Parliament to reduce and streamline this burden, but no matter what, the Party must be empowered to better support EDAs with their compliance requirements. There is a shared interest in doing so - any mistakes or missed deadlines reflect on the Party as a whole, not merely the EDA in question.

This compliance burden at the local level is mirrored – in spades – at the national level. At least half of the Party’s total staff resources are now required for these kinds of functions. This has included activities such as ensuring that PTAs and riding associations file returns with Elections Canada; organizing papers for audits; and the work involved in centralized receipting functions. Significant senior management attention must be devoted to ensuring compliance and administrative effectiveness.

The existence of PTAs further compound the work – for the purposes of the Elections Act, PTAs ARE the National Party, and hence must adapt their accounting and audits to conform to national standards. There is really no way around this: the law is the law. That means that the challenges of deriving revenue, administering it properly, receipting contributors, managing our federation, and performing legal and audit functions, have become central to our existence.

b. Successes to Date

Incredibly, and despite the political challenges of the past few years and the onset of minority governments, the Party has made numerous improvements to its structure. Key accomplishments have included new Provincial and Territorial Association (PTA) financing agreements; the establishment of a National Election Fund; the adoption of a national Code of Conduct; advancements in central receipting; making memberships available on-line; and the development and implementation of a National Membership Registry (NMR).

The first of these improvements, the PTA financing agreements, represented a sea change in managing and financing all levels of the Party. Gone are the days of myriad, often secret, revenue-sharing arrangements between a bewildering array of EDAs, PTAs, and the National Party. The Party openly, consciously and deliberately chose to spread its revenue evenly across the country, in the belief that building Liberalism somewhere helps build Liberalism everywhere. Moreover, PTAs were rewarded for the successes of fundraising in their region by returning a portion of those proceeds to them. This is a powerful and positive development.

However, another of these improvements, the NMR, is perhaps the most powerful legacy of the current National Executive. It courageously discarded the incomprehensible, and unworkable, patchwork of databases and information systems across the country into what will be a state-of-the-art piece of Party infrastructure. When complete, the NMR will manage riding and Commission memberships, Conventions, nominations, fundraising and receipting, and support voter identification and get-out-the-vote efforts. It will be the finest and most modern system of its kind in the country, and is drawing notice from our sister parties around the world.

c. The Imperative of Change

But much more is needed. Our fundamentals need to be re-assessed. There is a limit to the extent to which the above, administrative, improvements can restore our institutional competitiveness. The constitutional status quo – LPC’s current unwieldy and top-heavy structure - impedes our ability to compete financially and constrains us from effectively carrying out our three (3) core functions:

- 1) policy development,**
- 2) finance and fundraising, and**
- 3) organization and election readiness.**

The activity that occurs in the huge space that exists between EDAs, the most vital organism in our body politic, and the LPC, the body that unites us all, is too often extraneous to those core functions. **Put simply, our Party's structures must be aligned with our priorities.** If nothing else in this report is found to be worthy, this simple recommendation will hopefully endure.

Joe Klein, the famed American political writer and author of "Primary Colors", in his recent book "Politics Lost", laments the decline of his country's Democratic Party. For him, the realization that the Democratic Party had lost its way was in 1981, as it considered the loss of the White House to Ronald Reagan. He recalls writing the following for *Rolling Stone* magazine at that time:

In early June of 1981, some sixty million years after the last dinosaurs, chilled by the cooling air and addled by the heaving earth, stumbled toward extinction in the Colorado highlands, the leaders of the Democratic Party arrived in Denver for a meeting.

The Democrats, as always, divided themselves into caucuses: Women (concerned exclusively with the Equal Rights Amendment, a futile and symbolic gesture and therefore favored ground for Democrats), blacks, Hispanics, homosexuals (a lonely caucus of one), progressive-liberals and ethnics (a caucus for Caucasians?).

They argued over rules and procedures, though less vehemently than in the past. They passed resolutions, none of which showed the slightest spark of ingenuity or the faintest glimmer of a new idea. They railed against Reagan and walloped like happy brontosaurus in a turgid pool of self-congratulatory idealism. In the strictest sense of the word, they had become conservatives – defending the past, the troubled social programs of New Deal and Great Society vintage, with a vengeance.

We know the rest of the story. Through the eighties and nineties, the Democrats went from a Party that dominated both houses of Congress and competed to win in every local, state and national election to one that lost the vast majority of State Houses, Governorships, the Senate, the House of Representatives and (with the exception of the remarkable Bill Clinton) every single Presidential election. Obvious to even casual observers of American politics was the Democrats' loss of *unity of purpose*.

Liberals must avoid the wrong turns made by the Democratic Party. We cannot become hostages to an unwieldy structure, buried in rules and procedures. We must preserve our own unity of purpose. We must always seek to look forward, and challenge the status quo. This report, then, seeks to make a contribution to a debate about structure, so that a debate about ideas can occur.

d. Core Functions

Our structure *matters*. It matters because a good structure would allow for exciting work to occur. It matters because right now, it is too hard to even join the Liberal Party of Canada.

A good structure, by our definition, would allow for innovative thought on an ongoing basis, and would be a natural home for citizen engagement. It would prize and cherish every single member. It would seek to stimulate involvement (and membership) in our Party. It would seek to reward volunteer effort in local communities. It would cease

to foster interminable and sterile discussions around rules and procedures. And most importantly, it would seek to build a Party united around our three core functions. They bear repeating:

- **Policy development:** This is the most fundamental function of a political party. Party members get engaged because of their belief in a better community, a better country, and a better world. Any party that performs this function well will invariably become the home to society's most engaged, innovative and energetic persons. Liberals deserve nothing less than the most open, democratic and – especially – ongoing policy development process in Canada. Our Party's policy development infrastructure needs new life. This report will seek to define new and exciting ways to achieve this.
- **Fundraising and finance:** Changes to the Elections Act known as Bill C-24, and planned "accountability" measures, known as C-2, require that we rethink our processes and develop the means to raise significant amounts of money, in small amounts, from a great number of Canadians. Similarly, these legislative changes have created a massive burden for compliance on volunteers and staff at all levels of the Party. The penalties for non-compliance are severe, and the imperative to report all financial transactions and make them publicly available is ever-present. Our structures, needless to say, must support, value and enable these functions.
- **Organization and election readiness:** The onset of minority governments serves to highlight the need for a permanent organizational and election readiness infrastructure in our Party. There is only one logical place to aim this effort, and that is the only structure in our Party that elects Members of Parliament – the Electoral District Association (EDA). This report will contemplate structures, and means, for empowering EDAs on an ongoing basis and equipping them to win.

e. **Ridings: The Centre of our Universe**

Inherent in the debate over our Party's structures is the need for Liberals to refocus on activity at the local (EDA) level. EDAs are the home for all of our members. They are the centres of Party activity. They are composed of dedicated and idealistic volunteers. Incredibly, all too often, they are also lost in National Party discussions and decision-making. Structural renewal must therefore begin with a "return to ridings" with EDAs as the most valuable components of the National Party. Moreover, structural renewal will help EDAs accomplish the three core priorities that are prerequisites to victory.

The recommendations contained in this report will strengthen and empower our Party's grassroots. It will simplify and streamline our Party's structures and regroup our efforts around our three core functions. It will increase representation of local volunteers in national decision-making. **The end result will be a more open and democratic Party - united around Liberal values - better able to compete and win.**

We do believe that the choice in front of us is relatively simple: change or become unable to compete to win. The status quo leaves our Party at a significant electoral disadvantage. We do not wish to contemplate the effects on our country of a weakened, top-heavy Party. Rather, we are determined to once again challenge our Party to challenge the status quo and opt for a strong, decentralized volunteer-based institution. That is because history has shown - beyond all question - that a strong Liberal Party means a strong and united Canada.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force examined possible changes to the Party's Constitution – our founding document - that will enhance LPC's ability to perform its core functions, while staying faithful to the principles that have made the Party a wildly successful political institution throughout our history. More importantly, it is hoped that these changes, if adopted, will realign the processes and values of the Party such that we foster dynamism at the riding level, engage Liberals in the important debates of the day, and develop the ingredients critical to electoral success.

Further to much deliberation and analysis, consensus among Task Force members regarding proposed changes has been reached in the following key areas:

a. A National Party – A National Membership

“How do I join the Liberal Party of Canada?”

Amazingly, that is one of the hardest questions to answer in our Party. Another hard question is “how many members does the Liberal Party have?” That is because our Party is a patchwork quilt of fees, eligibilities, rules and procedures. PTAs are literally swimming in forms, databases, lists, renewals, and cheques.

That is because entry to the Liberal Party of Canada is gained through PTAs and their constituent clubs, Commissions and EDAs. The Liberal Party of Canada has no members. Its PTAs do.

Some PTAs estimate that 60-80% of their time and resources are applied to the administration of memberships, the debate and contemplation of new rules and processes, and the legal compliance that goes with these responsibilities.

Even with this Herculean and valiant effort on the part of PTAs, it is no surprise that no single PTA, acting in isolation (and with completely different rules and tools) from the other twelve, possesses the efficiencies of scale required to perform the job up to minimum standards. For example, in some provinces, membership cards, if they are sent at all, take six months to be received. By contrast, if you lose your credit card in the most remote region of the planet, you can usually have another one issued to you inside of 2-3 business days.

Incredibly, some PTAs feel forced to adopt rules and procedures that have the perverse effect of *limiting* membership (or membership forms) in the Party for fear of giving one “side” of a Party contest – a leadership candidate, a nomination contestant, a candidate for Party office – an advantage (and sometimes for the exactly opposite motivation).

How have we gotten here? Some “inconvenient truths” must be acknowledged. Nomination and leadership contests in the Liberal Party of Canada have become, by default, the proxies for the larger electoral contests in the country. Success in these contests has generally foreshadowed electoral success in the broadest sense. This has meant that control of local and regional institutions like PTAs and EDAs has enabled people of like mind to mould rules such that one candidate's interest is enhanced while others' interests are impeded.

Aside from the unfairness inherent in such an arrangement, persons interested in joining the Party, in becoming a candidate for public office, or in becoming its Leader, have been discouraged by the challenges of working their way through this kind of a maze.

Similarly, the National Party's interest (and the overriding interest of all Liberals) has been impeded by the existence in the Constitution of a clause *preventing* the Party from communicating with its members, absent explicit permission from the PTAs. Many are the Liberals who, on a daily basis, complain to LPC about their lack of information on the Party's policies, news and positions on the issues of the day. It comes as no small shock to these persons to learn that their Party – the most successful Party in the Western World – is *barred* from communicating directly with them.

The Task Force has heard from and acknowledges those in our Party who feel that our federated structure confers strategic advantage. We agree with this. However, we reject the notion that this must mean that the Party must continue to operate 13 distinct "membership centers" across the country, while keeping its "sales" function in Ottawa. No business or organization we are aware of functions along those principles. In the sections to follow, we outline what we believe to be the proper role of our federated members, the PTAs.

The Task Force therefore recommends proceeding with a proper, national membership. This membership would have common eligibility criteria and open access, at all times, for any person wishing to become a card-carrying Liberal. We propose no change in the base eligibility currently outlined in the LPC Constitution.

The benefits of national membership are compelling:

- achieving common eligibility eliminates the confusing patchwork of rules and processes;
- transparency and fairness for those who seek Liberal Party office or nomination;
- a common membership fee;
- portability of membership from coast-to-coast-to-coast;
- achieving economies of scale in membership administration;
- setting performance benchmarks for service and issuance of membership cards;
- and
- freeing up PTA resources to assist EDAs in performing their core functions as noted later.

The Party has made significant progress recently with the development of a National Membership Registry. The Party has also recently allowed the purchase of memberships online. Both are key developments accomplished with the full cooperation of our PTAs. Both will make the transition to national membership far easier than at any time in the past. (Keep in mind, however, that the technological "work arounds" to accommodate the patchwork of membership regimes across the country compounds the cost of the NMR in a significant way.)

Further, LPC HQ will no longer have to contact Provincial and Territorial Associations for permission to contact members, which will better equip us to appeal directly to a wider network of current/potential supporters and donors with news, policies and information.

Task Force Recommendations - Membership:

Therefore, the Red Ribbon Task Force makes the following recommendations:

- The LPC Constitution be amended to accommodate a national membership. Such membership would confer upon anyone eligible to join an automatic membership in the EDA and the PTA in which they ordinarily reside, and in any Commission for which they are eligible.
- A national fee should be imposed for such memberships, and that a percentage of said fee should be allocated to cost recovery, to be determined by the National Executive, in consultation with EDAs/Ridings through to the Council of Presidents. The remainder of the fee would be returned to the EDA/Riding of origin.
- The clause preventing LPC from communicating with its members should be deleted from the LPC Constitution.
- Membership by-laws would be the responsibility of the National Executive.
- An appropriate phase-in period should be envisaged.

b. Provincial/Territorial Associations

The role of Party Provincial and Territorial Associations (PTAs) was carefully assessed by Task Force members, particularly in the context of the post C-24 world. The Elections Act makes no distinction between PTAs and the National Party: for the purposes of the law, they are one in the same.

However, as indicated, the Task Force believes that a federated structure has conferred significant benefit on our Party and has contributed to its success. Therefore, we believe that a renewed focus on non-administrative tasks should be envisaged to give PTAs new meaning and relevance. The participation of our PTAs permits valuable debate, inclusion and a pan-Canadian perspective on the key issues facing the Party. PTAs have played, and must continue to play, an invaluable role with respect to policy development

There is an obvious gap with respect to what PTAs should do in theory, and what they actually do in practice.

Ideally, PTAs should represent their region to the National Party, and represent the National Party to their region. They should be a catalyst for local and regional action: promoting policy development, assisting EDAs in their core functions, supporting the national fundraising program and their local Laurier Club (after all, they receive a portion of this money!), conducting elections for Party office at the local/regional/national level, and generally keeping the Party in an advanced state of organizational and electoral readiness. They should be the local interface for EDAs and represent their interests to LPC, while providing staff and volunteer support “in the field”. PTAs should employ organizers who work with ridings to perform these functions. Currently, this is impossible, given the crushing financial burden of administering memberships. There is simply not enough money to do both, so the “minimum” (i.e. membership administration) gets done.

Further, the financing agreements signed between LPC and the PTAs represent significant progress for the Party. PTAs have committed - for example - to participate in the development and maintenance of a national database of members and to revamped financial reporting requirements. These are undoubtedly key advancements and are

to be lauded. At the same time, PTAs benefit from a guaranteed source of revenue from LPC. Fully one-quarter of LPC's revenues go to operate the PTAs, and as we have shown, the bulk of this investment is spent on membership administration and compliance requirements.

The Task Force believes that PTA revenues should go to building the Liberal Party and not separate membership lists. We believe that organizational and policy development work, acting as a catalyst and coordinating body for EDAs, be the first orders of business for these bodies. Commensurate with these "new" functions", PTAs should gain in influence on the National Executive, and representatives of PTAs should form the "heart" of the National Executive.

Task Force Recommendations - PTAs:

Therefore, we propose that a new "job description" for PTAs be included in the LPC Constitution, which would be amended as follows:

- The Liberal Party of Canada continues to be a constitutional federation composed of Provincial and Territorial Associations.
- That PTAs be composed of EDAs and Commissions (Clubs, etc.) as members.
- PTAs are responsible for organization and policy development in their region, for representing their region to the National Party, and for implementing national programs and initiatives in their region.
- PTAs are responsible for developing, in concert with their members, 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.
- PTAs (through their Presidents) would form the core of the new National Executive, as befits their roles as federated members, and as such, gain increased influence over National Party decision-making.
- PTA Constitutions should be amended, should these amendments be adopted, to reflect this new arrangement.

c. National Governance Structure

Task Force members considered various governance-related issues. A clear consensus emerged on the need to simplify our governance and volunteer structure – and that our decision making processes generally need to be streamlined.

The Liberal Party has a bewildering array of Committees and Commissions at the national and PTA level. Some have clear mandates, while others struggle to contribute or even meet on a regular basis. For many years, the Party has been adding such bodies, enshrining their existence in the Constitution, and providing them with representation on the National Executive. In many cases, these entities are accompanied by demands that PTAs set up "mirror" structures to provide representation on the national bodies, hence compounding the problem at the regional level.

The Task Force believes that this approach is inherently flawed. Inevitably, challenges come and go. Leaders and National Executives will appropriately identify their priorities, and set up the means to achieve progress on those priorities. What has become problematic, however, is that the entities envisaged in the Constitution are rarely those

to which the Party turns to achieve its priorities. What this has meant is that the elected, volunteer governance structure of the Party has been bypassed in favour of *ad hoc*, appointed bodies which operate in parallel to the formal Party structure, and demand the attention and resources of LPC. Meanwhile, the constitutionally-formed Standing Committees and Commissions struggle to remain relevant or to tackle issues.

What seems clear is that the Party has too many bodies in the space between the National Party and the EDAs. The National Executive, as the elected and representative body of all Liberals, should have the ultimate authority to determine its priorities and establish entities to achieve its objectives.

Standing Committees

Therefore, we recommend abolition of all Standing Committees envisaged under the current LPC Constitution. Only Committees required to support the core priorities of the Party should be contemplated in the Constitution, provided that the National Executive may set up a Committee for any purpose at any time.

We recommend, in this streamlined context, the establishment of:

- A revamped and strengthened Policy Committee (discussed in the section to follow);
- A National Revenue Committee and a Management Committee of the National Executive, to ensure that the finance/fundraising/administration functions of the Party are being performed; and
- A permanent National Election Readiness Committee, to ensure that the organizational and election readiness objectives of the Party are being met.

The National Campaign Committee would also be established from time to time in consultation with the Leader and be empowered to run the national campaign and expend money according to a budget approved by the National Executive.

Of course, the principles of equality of men and women, and of the English and French languages, must be maintained. Moreover, increased efforts must be made to ensure representation of youth and visible minorities in Party deliberative bodies.

Commissions

Commissions have become an integral part of the Party. There is seeming consensus that each of the Young Liberals, Aboriginal Peoples', Womens' and Seniors' Liberal Commissions have provided net benefits to the Party. Their continued existence is important to a great number of people. The Task Force is not inclined to challenge their continued existence.

However, there are perverse effects commensurate with the establishment of Commissions. First and foremost, anything that detracts from the core functions of the Party and does not contribute – directly or indirectly - to the formulation of policy or the ultimate election of Liberals to the House of Commons should be rejected.

Commissions exist, essentially, to increase the representation of their constituent members in the Party and as Members of Parliament. They do this by encouraging the Party to adopt policies that entice members of their constituencies to vote Liberal, and

by encouraging members of their constituencies to seek Party office and elective office. They are not designed to be parallel organizations that dissuade people from adding their energies to EDAs and the National Party. Rather, they are expected to add their unique voices to the existing efforts of the Party. This means, in our view, that Commissions must refocus their energies around adding energy and perspective to the Party's core functions.

There have been success stories in this regard. Liberals have fielded, and elected, more aboriginal candidates than ever before. Legendary are those "former" Young Liberals who have gone on to occupy positions of prominence in the Party. However, challenges remain. Women still do not run as Liberal candidates for the House of Commons in sufficient numbers, and the Seniors' Liberal Commission, still in its early days, has not yet attracted a significant number of eligible Liberals to its active ranks.

Perversely, Commission club provisions of the Constitution have also been used to generate accredited delegate spots for Conventions, only to disappear once the relevant Convention has ended. This should not detract from the excellent work done by legitimate clubs, but clearly everyone has an interest in seeing the abuses end. The Task Force believes that strengthened accreditation requirements should be adopted to reward those clubs that have been established legitimately, and ward off establishment of "paper clubs" that undermine the Party's electoral processes and reputation. Clubs that achieve the new accreditation threshold would receive delegate spots as follows: two per women's club, two (1M, 1F) per seniors' club, and of course four (2m, 2F) per campus club. Aboriginal delegates will be elected in EDAs, with two spots per riding.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends:

- That a minimum of 50 members be required to accredit a Commission club.
- That commission ceases to exist once Party members, at Convention, determine that they have completed or fulfilled their mandate.

The 50 member minimum for accreditation in no way discourages the establishment of clubs of any size. In fact, the Party should encourage clubs of any size to be established. However, only accredited clubs would be eligible to participate in activities established pursuant to the Constitution of the Party, such as Conventions.

The National Executive

Task Force members are also in full agreement that the size of the National Executive must be significantly reduced, as the current structure does not permit the necessary focus required to chart a forward path for the Party. We are mindful, however, that any reduction must be accompanied by a system of "checks and balances" which serve to protect the interests of the grassroots of the Party, to ensure that our core functions are being performed, and that EDAs are represented. More on that later.

The National Executive of the Party is an unwieldy body, comprising approximately sixty (60) persons, and whose meetings attract upwards of eighty (80) persons. Governance experts everywhere would confirm that any body this size cannot serve as an effective decision-making structure. This is also true in fact. The National Executive of LPC serves largely as a ratification entity for decisions made elsewhere. Individual members of the National Executive feel frustrated that their voice cannot be heard in a group of sixty persons. Contradictions also exist. Who speaks for British Columbia, for example? Is

it the President of LPC(BC)? Or the Regional Vice-President (BC)? Or, for that matter, the national Vice-president (English-speaking), who also happens to come from that province? Which of the seven (7) representatives of the Womens' Commission speaks for that entity? Which of the six (6) Young Liberals? Who of the Chief Financial Officer, the Secretary Treasurer, or the Chair of the Revenue Committee is responsible for detailing the Party's fundraising initiatives?

Each meeting of the National Executive now costs over \$50,000. It is reasonable to ask whether those resources would be better spent on one of the Party's core functions. We therefore recommend that the current National Executive be required to meet less often (twice a year), and be significantly reduced in size, such that it becomes an effective decision-making body. Numerous permutations have been discussed, but some principles were followed in determining our recommendations for membership on the National Executive:

- Elimination of overlapping responsibilities;
- Representation of PTAs;
- Representation of Commissions;
- Participation of those responsible for the Party's core functions (Policy, Finance Fundraising, Organization/Election Readiness);
- Preservation of institutional memory; and
- Coordination with National Caucus and the Leader.

Therefore, the following membership on National Executive is recommended:

- The President;
- The Leader;
- The Past President;
- Two National Vice-Presidents (English- and French-speaking);
- The National Policy Chair;
- The Presidents of the ten Provincial federated members;
- One of the Presidents of the three Territorial federated members, to be selected by them;
- One representative, either the President or one of the Co-Presidents, of each of the Commissions;
- A representative of National Caucus, preferably the National Caucus Chair;
- The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) (non-voting);
- The Chair of the Federal Liberal Agency of Canada (FLAC), the Party's Chief Agent (non-voting);
- The Chair of the Party's Revenue Committee (non-voting);
- The National Campaign Co-chairs (non-voting); and
- The National Director (non-voting).

The Management Committee of the Party would meet four times annually and be a subcommittee of, and have delegated decision-making authority similar to that of the National Executive. We recommend that the Management Committee would include:

- The President;
- The Leader;
- Two National Vice-Presidents (English- and French-speaking);
- The National Policy Chair;
- One PTA president (as selected among themselves);

- The Chief Financial Officer;
- The National Campaign Co-chair (one of the two co-chairs); and
- The National Director (non-voting).

Importantly, in order to ensure enhanced coordination of the activities of the Parliamentary wing and the Party, we further recommend:

- That the Leader be a member of the Management Committee, and shall attend at least half of this Committee's meetings.

We make this recommendation in the belief that better awareness of the Party's state of affairs, plans and objectives on the part of the Leader will result in better decision-making by *both* the Party and the Leader, and possibly avoid mistakes by both. Of course, the Leader (and the President) would continue to be a member of all decision-making bodies and Committees of the Party.

The Revenue Committee would be formed of a Chair, ten (10) provincial revenue chairs, the Chairs of the Judy LaMarsh Fund and the Aboriginal Electoral Endowment, the CFO and the Chair of FLAC. It would be responsible for developing the Party's revenue budget for approval by Management and the National Executive.

For the guidance of individuals seeking election to the National Executive at the biennial convention in November, a transitional provision should be proposed whereby those positions being phased out would continue to exist for a period of one year or until the first meeting of the Council of Presidents.

The Council of Presidents

Agreement was also reached with respect to the need for a new entity, comprised of all EDA presidents and National Executive members. It is recommended that:

- A Council of Presidents be established.

The Task Force believes that this new entity is vital in a renewed effort to foster greater engagement with the Party's grassroots and greater coordination of Party activities.

The Council of Presidents would meet annually, as a "stand-alone" in one year, and in conjunction with Biennial Conventions in the next. Logically, its meetings would also 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.

Its duties would be 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 consideration of by-laws related to the National Membership Registry, such as fees and procedures. It will also provide a useful forum for the Leader to outline his or her plans for the future. Perhaps most importantly, it will allow representatives of every single EDA to be consulted on, and gain knowledge of, all of the policies and procedures of the Party.

The Task Force further believes that meetings of this body will, of themselves, become catalysts for activity in the Party and in EDAs. Meetings of the Council of Presidents will impose deadlines and accountability on all Party entities. Plans will have to be defended

and explained. The end result will be better cohesiveness, and enhanced unity of purpose. For that very reason, while deliberations should be able to be held in camera at the President's discretion, we further believe that meetings of the Council of Presidents should be open to all members of the Party (without the right to vote, of course).

Of course, the establishment of a Council of Presidents will incur costs. We believe these costs should be widely dispersed. Therefore, we further recommend:

- That travel, meals and lodging expenses for participants be borne by EDAs (or PTAs on their behalf), while meeting costs and translation would be the responsibility of LPC.

6. THE POLICY IMPERATIVE

The Party's policy platform - whether assessed issue by issue or writ large - serves as reflection of the Party's fundamental belief structure. While the term "policy development" means different things to different members, our platform and key positions taken together constitute our "essence" as a Party.

Perhaps a more salient point, though, is how the current policy process serves as the means through which our caucus, Party members, volunteers and potential supporters are engaged and made to feel part of helping to shape the Party.

Many within the Party – Task Force members included - would argue that we have lost our way in this respect; that such engagement needs to be done better; and that clarity and structural changes are needed.

Indeed, there exists a significant opportunity to develop modern and comprehensive means to engage Canadians in discussions about issues that are meaningful to them. As indicated above, people get involved in political parties to make a difference. They do not seek to be "heeded" as much as they seek to be heard. The Task Force believes that participation and membership in our Party will follow once processes exist to engage members in the formulation of policy. Thus would begin a virtuous cycle of engagement, membership, donation, participation and ultimately, perhaps even candidacy for Party or public office. Put simply, "doing policy right" can be the catalyst for development of the Party on many levels.

Policy development processes must also be "evergreen". The work of EDAs, PTAs and the National Party must constantly involve efforts aimed at engaging their members. No one should need to wait for permission from LPC to launch consultations, discussions and debate on the issues confronting communities and the country.

Moreover, the policy development process of the Party currently does not leave participants with the feeling that their voice has been considered. Little formal accountability exists after the outcomes of the process (i.e. resolutions adopted at a Convention). Members are left to wonder if resolutions have been considered by the Leader or the Caucus (or Cabinet). Formal reporting on the consideration of Party policy development by the Parliamentary wing is rare or non-existent.

The Task Force perceives a declining connection between the policy development process and the platform development process. It occurs to us as passing strange, as indeed it does to participants in the Party's policy development initiatives, that the current LPC Constitution contemplates *separate* policy development and platform development Committees.

The Task Force does not perceive that it is the Party's desire to pre-empt the Leader's authority over the inclusion (or exclusion) of items in the Party's Platform. In fact, we propose to formalize that authority. However, enhanced constitutional provisions to explain why some policies were adopted and others were not will serve to validate the efforts of Party members who participate in policy development.

While easy to recognize the problems, however, it is more difficult to develop the appropriate solutions.

Task Force members agree that the policy development process in many ways serves as the lifeblood of the Party, and that policy is an ideal vehicle for renewal. Further, Task Force members view our policy infrastructure, while earnest and (very) hard-working, as relatively ill-equipped to effectively deal with the big questions facing both the Party and the country, and that the process is too tightly controlled, disconnected from the grassroots, and unable to harness ideas around regional and national policy approaches.

Part of the problem, we submit, is that the process itself is somewhat flawed – and that the importance of process generally in creating policy has been generally overlooked by the Party. Policy and process cannot be separated; in many ways policy *is* process. Given the energy, ideas and talent among Liberals across the country, getting the policy piece “right” will undoubtedly make our Party stronger.

The Task Force believes that, by inserting the policy development function at the heart of the structures of the Party, we will achieve better processes, engagement, and ultimately, electoral success. We do not propose a constitutional “straitjacket”-type process. Rather, we believe that elevating the function inside the Party will engender ingenuity in establishing processes, both formal and informal.

Task Force recommendations

Therefore, the Task Force recommends:

- The establishment of a Permanent Standing Committee of the Party dedicated to ongoing Policy and Platform Development.
- The Committee would be composed of a Chair, elected at Biennial Conventions, *elected* representatives of each Provincial Association and one *elected* representative of the three territorial associations, one representative of each of the Commissions, the Campaign Co-chairs, the President and the National Director (non-voting).
- To properly blend the policy development and platform processes, additional appointments under the direct purview of the Leader are required. For the Committee to enjoy the confidence of the Leader and the Caucus, it must necessarily include persons who enjoy their confidence. Of course, the Leader him/herself would be eligible to serve on the Committee, but would also be empowered to appoint additional persons to the Committee as follows: four members of Caucus (two of whom would necessarily be Cabinet members, when applicable, and one of whom would be a Senator), and four other Liberals who would serve as Leaders’ representatives. The Leader would also appoint a Vice-chair of the Committee from among the members. This person would ideally be the Leader’s lead person responsible for election platform development.
- The Leader would also be asked to appoint one of the Caucus representatives on the Committee as a “Caucus Accountability Officer”. (This person would necessarily be a Minister, when applicable). This person would be required to report to the Council of Presidents and to Biennial Conventions on the consideration of Party policies by the Parliamentary wing of the Party, to relate the platform to the Party’s policy development efforts, and generally to provide accountability. This serves to underscore the seriousness with which the Party views “policy accountability” between the Party and the Caucus.
- Because of its size, the Policy committee would not be required to (but could) meet in person (and would in any event closely coordinate its activities via teleconference and other means). However, we recommend that the Constitution

be amended to further provide for a subcommittee of the Policy and Platform Committee, called the “Policy Strategy Committee”. The purpose of this Committee would be to draft and present a comprehensive annual plan for policy development to the Council of Presidents. This Committee would include the Chair and Vice-chair, the Caucus Accountability Officer, and four other members of the Committee. Their plan would include the budget, means, and detailed implementation plan for policy development in the Party over the course of the year.

- Finally, to ensure that the Leader has an ultimate (and appropriate) veto over the policies that he/she is asked to carry into an election and defend as Leader of the Party, a “policy approval” subcommittee of the Party is recommended. This subcommittee would comprise the President, the two National Vice-presidents, and the Policy Chair, and the Leader would be required to consult this group before rejecting approved Party policy.
- 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.

7. CONVENTIONS AND LEADERSHIP

An exciting mix of show and substance, Party Conventions are where various key decisions are made, where first-timers develop an intellectual bond to the Party, where long-time members are reinvigorated, and where the Party maps out the road ahead. Conventions can be the birthplace of great ideas, forums for debate and discussion, and, more often than not, the launch pad for future Prime Ministers. Conventions are also the supreme decision-making authority in the Party.

Conventions, to use the overworked expression, are a very good thing. For the reasons cited above, participation in Conventions is to be encouraged. Task Force members recognize that our members are the essential cornerstone of the Convention process: their energy, ideas and hard work make our Conventions a success. Our members also play a fundamental role on several key fronts – the election of delegates to represent them, the development of policies for consideration, and the election (and periodic review) of Leaders. Conventions must continue to serve as the catalysts for Party activism.

However, the cost of both holding and attending a Convention - regardless of the type and size - has increased greatly over the years. Further, the fees paid by members to attend Conventions are considered a donation to the Party. This legal requirement diverts members' resources away from funding that might otherwise be available to support ridings, candidates and the other work of our Party. The Party also continues, at significant expense, to offer generous subsidies for travel to members who must travel great distances to take part in Conventions.

Therefore, several factors must be weighed in considering the issue of Party Conventions. Regardless, there will always be Biennial Conventions, and they need to be encouraged. In keeping with a renewed focus on EDAs as the centers of Party activity, the Task Force believes that it is time to expand the size of delegations from EDAs to Party Conventions. We believe that twenty (20) members of each EDA should be eligible to attend Party Conventions. Of this number, ten would be men and ten would be women. Three of each gender would be required to be youth, thus enhancing youth representation at Conventions. The requirement for seniors would be abandoned. Riding Presidents and Past candidates would continue as *ex-officio* delegates. The number of alternates would be unlimited, to further stimulate participation.

Initial discussions have been held with representatives of the Aboriginal Peoples' Commission (APC) concerning reform of the unwieldy aboriginal delegate formula in the LPC Constitution. The Task Force believes that scrapping this formula is a good idea, and that a simplification would be achieved by adding two additional delegate spots (one man and one woman) from each EDA, dedicated to aboriginal peoples. To be clear, aboriginals would not be limited to two spots, but would be guaranteed at least two. We look forward to concluding the discussions around potentially implementing such a powerfully symbolic idea.

Aside from the obvious benefits of increased participation and its positive effects on the Party and its EDAs, this change also has the virtue of spreading the (largely fixed) costs of a Convention over more participants, thus reducing the cost for everyone. We continue to believe, however, that LPC must (as it is now) be required to break even on Conventions.

So much then, for the question of Conventions in general. Increased participation and

a larger delegate structure ought to be implemented, no matter what. However, added to these considerations is the question of Leadership, and whether or not a Convention should elect the Leader. Many are those who urge the Party to move to a one-member, one-vote system where each EDA would have an equal weight. Many others wish to retain the excitement of a multi-ballot Leadership Convention (even though the need to elect a Leader may not fall conveniently into a normal Biennial cycle). These differences of opinion exist on the Task Force, as they do in the Party at large.

No matter what, however, some changes are required. Whatever the process, the onset of minority governments and campaign finance reforms such as C-24 and C-2 require us to consider shortening whatever process is chosen. The current Leadership process, prescribed by the LPC Constitution, was initiated in March and culminates in December. This is simply too long, to say nothing of the significant expense incurred by both the Leadership Candidates and the Party during this long period. It is onerous, time-consuming, costly and must be reviewed. Therefore, if the current process is retained, the Task Force believes that that “act of retention” must be accompanied by a constitutionally-approved process of review of the current selection process, with a view to shortening it and making it less costly and unwieldy for all concerned.

The upcoming Convention, we believe, must be given an option surrounding Leadership selection, between the status quo (accompanied by the need to streamline it) and a weighted one-member, one-vote system such as that employed by all other major national parties (and most provincial parties). This system would consist of a universal (i.e. all members eligible to vote), preferential (i.e. ranked preferences) ballot, where each EDA is given equal weight, most likely by allocating 100 points to each EDA. This system would have the virtue of being shorter, less costly for all involved and (possibly) more democratic. However, it would deprive the Party of a seminal event which attracts national attention and results in a better brokering of interests that fosters compromise.

In any event, the arguments for and against both procedures are well-known. The Task Force believes it is time to choose. However, we do not believe that this choice is linked to those we recommend in the “Party structure” sections of this document. Put another way, we do not wish to force people to vote against what we believe are essential and worthy reforms like those suggested herein, merely because one does not favour one or the other method of Leadership selection. Therefore, we recommend that delegates to the upcoming Convention vote separately on structural reform and on Conventions & leadership selection. In the vote on changes to Conventions, delegates would be asked to choose which form of leadership selection they favour (by a simple majority), and then on adopting the favoured choice.

Finally, the Task Force recommends that the process of “leadership review” be streamlined. Currently, leadership reviews are required at the first Biennial Convention after every election, and then by a “double” vote, first in the EDAs, then again at the Convention itself. Failure to achieve 50 percent plus one in either contest automatically triggers a Leadership Convention.

While never “successfully” used in the LPC, the Task Force feels that this costly and controversial process is, frankly, overkill (punctuated once again by the onset of minority government). Therefore, consistent with the enhanced role of EDAs envisaged in this report, the Task Force recommends that “leadership review” balloting occur only by a universal - but weighted - vote of all members of the Party (held in conjunction with delegate selection for the relevant Biennial Convention). Once again, each riding would

be allocated 100 points, and the simple percentages of “yes” and “no” ballots would be averaged across all EDAs. This “score” would then be announced at the Biennial Convention, but no such vote would occur at the Convention. Moreover, leadership review votes would occur *only* after elections where our Leader did not become Prime Minister of Canada.

The Task Force therefore recommends:

- Increasing the size of EDA delegations to LPC Conventions to 20, of which ten (10) would be male and ten (10) female, including six youth. Aboriginal delegates could be elected from EDAs, instead of the current algebraic delegate formula. No change to current *ex-officio* eligibility is contemplated, although we do note that their representation would be further diluted.
- Offering delegates a choice between a “status quo” and a “weighted one-member, one-vote” method of leadership selection at the upcoming Convention.
- Not linking this choice to a vote on structural reforms to the Party recommended herein.
- Streamlining the current leadership review process by removing the “double vote” and requiring review only after an election loss.

8. CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, the recommendations herein will engender much discussion and debate. The Liberal Party of Canada, like it or not, is an impressive, sprawling, complicated, diffuse and decentralized entity. Some say that it is not broken and should not be fixed, while pointing to our electoral success. Many others think changes should be made, that now is the time to make them, as the Party engages in a process of renewal. This latter group mostly includes people who sense something isn't working, but mostly cannot put their finger on what that "something" is. This group, it is fair to say, included the members of the Task Force, who spent countless hours determining exactly what that "something" is.

Still, others believe that we should have gone further, that any entities other than EDAs and the National Party are extraneous to our requirements and should be discarded. We reject that view as firmly as we reject the status quo. We think that part of what defines us as Liberals are the lengths to which we go to ensure representation of society's underrepresented, and of provinces and territories who form the federation of our country.

What we propose is a "rebalancing" of our structures, one that swings the pendulum more resolutely toward individual members and their riding associations. We have, in building a great national institution, failed to reinforce the linkages back to where it all begins – in the hearts and minds of our members and the communities where they live. This report proposes to reconnect them.

No matter what Liberals' views of our recommendations, we strongly urge that they be allowed to choose the course of our Party's evolution. Therefore, we urge the National Executive, the entity that democratically created this Task Force, to oversee forthwith the drafting of constitutional amendments to put before the upcoming Convention. The amendments face an uphill climb: fully two-thirds of delegates must approve them before they become part of the Party's Constitution. Regardless, we believe they merit consideration and healthy debate.

In fact, it is our final hope that such debate occur long before delegates and others gather in Montréal. That is why we urge that this report be released to all EDA presidents, PTA Executive members and any others with a direct interest in the affairs of the LPC. Appropriate feedback mechanisms, such as an e-mail link through the Party's Web Site, should be established to hear from all those who agree, disagree, or have suggestions for improvements.

The Liberal Party belongs to all of us, and we must collectively agree to change it. Let the discussions begin!