

# WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOUR FREEDOM PARTY?

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Since Ontario Election 1999, Freedom Party has been more active than at any time in its history. Many of you have already read about or otherwise noticed the changes:

1. To Freedom Party of Ontario ("Fp Ontario") has been added three other organizations: Freedom Party of Canada ("Fp Canada"), Freedom Party International (Fp International), and the fledgling Freedom Party USA (Fp USA).
2. A separate web site has been set up for each Freedom Party organization. The web address ("URL") for Fp Ontario has changed to the more region specific [www.freedomparty.on.ca](http://www.freedomparty.on.ca). The old Fp Ontario URL, [www.freedomparty.org](http://www.freedomparty.org), is now the official web site of Fp International. Fp Canada can be found at [www.freedomparty.ca](http://www.freedomparty.ca), and Fp USA can be found at [www.freedomparty.us](http://www.freedomparty.us).
3. After three years of study, consideration, meetings, drafts and re-drafts, Fp Ontario and Fp Canada each have, like all major political parties, adopted a constitution (the constitution of Fp Ontario can be found on the web at [www.freedomparty.on.ca/constitution.htm](http://www.freedomparty.on.ca/constitution.htm), and the constitution for Fp Canada can be found at [www.freedomparty.ca/html/en/constitution.htm](http://www.freedomparty.ca/html/en/constitution.htm)). The constitution of each Fp party tells every member of the party how the organization runs: who has authority to do what, who has a duty to do what, who votes on what and how. From the adoption of policies to becoming a member, a candidate, a riding association president, a provincial/national councillor, an officer, or the leader: all of the procedures are set out in the constitution so that all members know how to accomplish what they want to accomplish as a member of Fp.
4. Fp Ontario and Fp Canada each have newly-written and adopted statements of policy (Fp Ontario: [www.freedomparty.on.ca/policies.htm](http://www.freedomparty.on.ca/policies.htm), Fp Canada: [www.freedomparty.ca/html/en/policies.htm](http://www.freedomparty.ca/html/en/policies.htm)). I'll go into more about those statements, below.
5. There has also been a change in leaders, some change on the executive, a new Fp logo, new membership forms and standardized procedures for membership, and a host of other, smaller non-policy oriented changes.
6. Meetings of the executive are now held at regular, monthly intervals, and functions for the members and the public have both increased in frequency, and diversified in location across Ontario: overall, a dramatic increase in activity and involvement.

As you know, when any organization makes changes, it receives feedback from its members and others. In the case of Freedom Party, almost all of the feedback has been

positive. But there have been a few questions from members also. Accordingly, I provide below some of the rationale for the changes that have been made, and respond to some questions Fp has received.

## WHY THE CHANGES?

The Constitution of Canada divides law-making power between the federal Parliament in Ottawa, and the provincial Legislatures (in Ontario, Queen's Park in Toronto). For example, only the federal Parliament can make criminal laws (e.g., Marijuana laws, obscenity laws etc.), or change the federal Income Tax Act or the GST. Only the provinces have the legislative authority to make laws about education and healthcare. If Fp Ontario is to improve its credibility as an Ontario political party, it is a huge mistake for Fp Ontario to have policies on crimes, the GST etc.: even if Fp Ontario formed the government in Ontario, the Constitution of Canada would prevent an Fp government from changing criminal, income tax, or GST laws (as examples). So, federal policies that were included in the Fp Ontario election '99 statement of policies do not appear in the new Fp Ontario statement of policies.

The proposed elimination of federal policies from the Fp policy statement begged the question: well, if Fp Ontario is no longer going to focus on federal issues, who will? A decision had to be made: either stop objecting to unjust federal laws, or form a federal counterpart to Fp Ontario. The answer was clear and obvious: we simply could not stop voicing our objection to outrageous federal laws: we had to form a political party that would carry on the task formerly handled by Fp Ontario. So, in July of 2001, Fp Canada was founded by me and Fp Ontario founder Robert Metz. In 2002, Fp Ontario's executive voted to ratify the decision by Robert and myself to form Fp Canada, thereby formally acknowledging the connection between the two organizations. FpO's executive also voted on the appointment of the first executive for Fp Canada. Paul McKeever became Fp Canada's first leader. Fp Canada's constitution was adopted at the same time as the Fp Ontario constitution: in September of 2002.

Different considerations preceded the formation of Fp International. Most importantly, Fp Ontario has never limited itself to Ontario politics and Ontario political issues. It was noted above that Fp Ontario has spoken out about federal issues, but Fp Ontario has also spoken and written about higher principles and a philosophy that is applicable around the globe. For example, Fp Ontario has firmly defended "property rights" generally: we have never limited ourselves to "property rights in Ontario, but everyone else can fend for themselves". We have spoken out against using the force of government to make people speak one language or another (or more than one language): this was never an issue limited to Ontario. Because Fp Ontario has taken such a wide, philosophical approach on so many issues, Fp Ontario's audience has not been limited to Ontario. Even when it was only the web site for Fp Ontario, our *www.freedomparty.org* web site was getting over two million hits per year, at least half of it from other provinces, from the USA, or from other countries. Fp calendars have sold not just to Ontarians, but to like-minded folk elsewhere as well. The fact that Fp Ontario has taken on a broad, philosophical approach

has also had the result that leading scientists, economists, philosophers etc. have been attracted to Fp, and contributed articles to Fp's journal of opinions and ideas, Consent.

Of course, much of what made Fp Ontario marketable to thinkers and philosophically minded folk made Fp Ontario an organization that appeared, to the general public, less a political party and more a centre for the study and promotion of life, liberty and property rights. This semi-academic approach also meant that, at election time, Fp Ontario's efforts to win seats were too late, under-organized, and focused on issues that, sometimes sadly, the average Ontario voter didn't see as high priority issues...or issues, in the usual sense, at all. For example, in Election '99, Fp Ontario had policies on such broad philosophical/social systems as "Socialism", "Freedom of Choice", and "Democracy". We even had a policy on "Freedom Party"! What did the voter see as the issues? Health care, education, and taxes. By having policies on broad philosophical concepts instead of on particular services, taxes, etc., Fp Ontario looked out of touch and - dare I say it - like a "fringe" party. If Fp Ontario was to function as a political party rather than a think tank or social club, it was going to have to focus on electoral politics and provide the general public with clear policy statements on the issues that mattered *to the voter*: Fp Ontario's *market*, if you will.

There was another issue. Specifically, Fp Ontario's *goal* and *direction* has never changed and is now constitutionally entrenched so that it will never change: the founding principle of Fp Ontario remains that "every individual, in the peaceful pursuit of personal fulfillment, has an absolute right to his or her own life, liberty and property". However, less thought had gone into the best approach to implementing the high ideals of individual freedom that Fp Ontario was promoting.

Governments can make some changes even overnight without having much of a negative impact on the well-being of the populace. For example, immediate electoral reform would harm nobody. But other changes cannot occur so quickly. For example, a decrease in the revenues of a government must be complemented by decreases in spending if borrowing is to be avoided. This is not a simple matter. For example, a responsible government has leases and employment contracts to respect: the termination of these contracts must be done lawfully. As another example: people have to become informed when a system for the provision of a service changes. Consider the confusion and catastrophe that would result were the state to instantly stop paying for health care services without first notifying people of the need to purchase their own health care insurance, and cutting their taxes sufficiently to ensure that they had the money to buy the insurance.

Keeping in mind that Fp Ontario wants now to focus on winning seats so that it can actually change laws in ways consistent with the goals of the party, Fp Ontario has clearly decided not to be a band of radical revolutionaries. Fp has a *goal* and a *compass*: we know where we are going and in what direction to travel. But we will not get there if we propose to take a rocket, smashing into trees and toppling pedestrians. If Freedom party is to succeed, it must propose to get their on foot: freedom wasn't taken away all at once, and it cannot reasonably and responsibly be restored all at once either.

But the decision to seek power with a gradual, issue-oriented approach left unanswered another question. Specifically, if Fp Ontario was to go “mainstream” - to stop advocating broad philosophical concepts and economic theories, and to start trying to win votes with a short list of policies on the issues that the Ontario *voter* finds important - who was going to continue pushing for the broad and widely-applicable things that mattered? Who would explain the nature of human kind and the importance of inalienable rights of life, liberty and property? Who was going to explain the evils of communism, to promote objectivism or capitalism generally? Who was going to perform the educational functions that Fp Ontario had always carried out with calendars, booklets, speakers, etc.? In short: who was going to educate the public about the moral underpinnings of a capitalist society, and promote with a sound moral defence every individual’s absolute and inalienable rights of life, liberty and property?

After a great degree of thought, the answer now seems an obvious one. Fp Ontario had always functioned both as a party seeking seats, and as a party that educated and advocated life, liberty and property in philosophical ways that attracted an international audience. An organization - other than a political party - needed to continue that work. The concept of Freedom Party International was born. And, because much of the international traffic to Fp Ontario’s former web site ([www.freedomparty.org](http://www.freedomparty.org)) was to documents like Consent, Censorship Alert, Just Say Know to Whole Language, etc., it was decided that all of that material would remain at [www.freedomparty.org](http://www.freedomparty.org), but under the control of the new organization, Fp International. The new web site for Fp Ontario would be the region-specific [www.freedomparty.on.ca](http://www.freedomparty.on.ca), and would not focus on broad philosophical principles or statements: it would be the mainstream, electoral politics wing of Fp International in Ontario. Similarly, Fp Canada would be the mainstream, electoral politics wing of Fp International throughout Canada. Fp International, then, will continue to promote life, liberty and property in broad, philosophical or ideological terms to an audience both within Ontario and around the rest of the globe.

In short, Fp Ontario’s functions have been divided up between itself, Fp Canada, and Fp International. Fp Ontario and Fp Canada will now focus on winning seats with reasonable policies that propose a gradual restoration of freedom in Ontario without compromising the goals and direction that Fp Ontario has always had. Fp International will now publish Consent and other more philosophically-oriented publications to an international audience. Fp International is currently led by the same folk that lead Fp Ontario, so there should be no fear that Fp will shift its ideology.

So, what about Fp USA? Well, given the amount of traffic to [www.freedomparty.org](http://www.freedomparty.org) that has been coming from the USA, and given the new division of responsibilities, Fp USA was the logical compliment to Fp International in the USA. Accordingly, a provisional web site was set up at [www.freedomparty.us](http://www.freedomparty.us). Fp International is endeavoring to establish, in the USA, the first executive of Fp USA, who will then carry on all of the work necessary to build that party. Best of all, members of an Fp political party (Fp Ontario, Fp Canada, Fp USA) will now share a common organization (Fp International) a ‘brand name’ known throughout the industrialized world (“Freedom Party”), and a

common purpose with their friends and neighbours in other jurisdictions: the world's *only* political movement for the protection of every individual's absolute rights of life, liberty and property. In numbers there is strength, and Fp Ontario will now benefit from affiliation with Fp International members throughout Canada and the USA.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q. I liked the green Fp on a white background. How come Fp Ontario is using a white Fp on a blue and red background, Fp Canada is using a white Fp on a deep red background, Fp USA is using a flag-decorated Fp on a blue background, etc.? Shouldn't everyone use a green Fp?**

A. There are a few answers to that question. First, it is arguable that Fp Ontario's old logo was hardly known in most of the province, so it is doubtful that the changed shape of the Fp, or the changed colours, will cause the general public not to recognize us any more than they didn't recognize us before. Second, the less one's logo is tied to a colour, the more strong will be everyone's memory for the logo, and the more flexible will be the use of the logo around the globe. For example, you will witness many magazines that have a logo the colour of which changes from issue to issue, but the shape of which remains intact. In the context of political parties, each jurisdiction has its historical ties to colours. Ontario's flag is primarily red and contains a union jack (red, white and blue). Canada's flag is red and white. PEI has a flag with a lot of gold and red in it. Alberta's flag is primarily blue. Nova Scotia and Quebec use blue and white colours on their flags. The flags of the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand are all red, white and blue. People in a given jurisdiction have a warm affiliation with their flags and flag colours. If the Fp logo is to be used as a strong, *internationally-recognized* logo, it must not be tied to any specific colour. If the same Fp logo is used by political parties in the USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, all of the provinces and Canada, Fp's notoriety is sure to improve.

Second, in Ontario, voters are very tied to red and blue (and, to a lesser extent, orange) as "mainstream" political party sign colours. Very, very few Ontarians will look at a green sign (or a pink sign, or a yellow sign, etc.) and think anything other than "fringe party". We must be sensitive to the traditions and colour sensitivities of voters if we are not to be undermined by them. We must distinguish ourselves by our ideas and our logo: our colours are irrelevant at this point. Accordingly, in Ontario, we have used the traditional red and blue colouration as a background to the Fp logo.

**Q. Where's your official policy on (*fill in the blank*)?**

A. It is true that Fp Ontario and Fp Canada have not included, in their most recent policy statements, an exhaustive list of Fp's positions on every single issue. In some cases, we just have not had a chance to brush up the wording in less ideological, and more

practical ways. You may share the view that capitalism is the only moral social/political system known to human kind. You may advocate the metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and politics of Objectivism. Fp Ontario, however, is not promoting a philosophy (that's a job for Fp International). Fp Ontario is offering policies (that are *consistent with* its underlying philosophy) and asking the voter to give them the seats needed to implement the policies. Voters demand to know not about philosophical underpinnings but about how a given policy will make things better for them and for their families: that is what Fp Ontario and Fp Canada endeavour to show the voter through their respective policy statements.

Also, as noted above, several policies that appeared in the election '99 policy statement were on topics that were more philosophical in nature, or that were federal in nature, and that therefore have no place in a policy statement by a provincial party that seeks to win seats. Accordingly, you will not see, in the Fp Ontario policy statement, a policy on "socialism", or a policy on marijuana laws: the first is too philosophical (falling within the role of Fp International), the second federal (falling within the role of Fp Canada). This does not mean that Fp is "selling out" or radically changing our stance. There has been no decision to abandon a given point of view. It's simply the case that Fp Ontario's policy statement now focuses on the issues that are most important to the many voters in Ontario.

## **Q. How to I Become and Stay a Member of Fp Ontario?**

A. Adopted September 8, 2002, Part III of the constitution of Fp Ontario explains membership. In that Part, Section 8 of the constitution of Fp Ontario states:

*"Membership in the FPO is open to all Canadian citizens or landed immigrants, who are ordinarily resident in Ontario, who are sixteen (16) years of age or older and who support the Objectives of the FPO."*

Section 6 of the constitution states:

*"The objectives of the FPO (hereinafter referred to as the "Objectives") are:*

*(a) to encourage voters to vote for FPO candidates in provincial elections and by-elections;*

*(b) to influence government through the election of FPO members of the Ontario provincial Legislature, for the better protection in Ontario of every individual's rights of life, liberty and property; and*

*(c) to build an organization of people who will work toward the achievement of Objectives (a) and (b)."*

If you were a member of Fp Ontario prior to the adoption of the party constitution (September 8, 2002), section 16 of the constitution applies to you:

*“After the adoption of this Constitution, no person shall be a Member whose Application for Membership and Membership fee has not been received by the Secretary of the Provincial Executive or a person to whom the Provincial Executive has delegated the same responsibilities in respect of applications for Membership. **Unless renewed pursuant to this Part, Memberships obtained prior to the adoption of this Constitution shall expire not later than one year following the adoption of this Constitution.**”*

So, if you were a member of Fp Ontario prior to September 8, 2002 then, to remain a member, you should send *to the Secretary of Fp Ontario* (at Fp Ontario headquarters), a Membership Application together with the applicable fee (\$10, at present), *not later than September 8, 2003*. Memberships last for a term of one year, so you should try to remember to file your application and membership fee annually. You can obtain the Membership Application either by calling 1-800-830-3301, or by going to the web site and printing one off (for Fp Ontario: [www.freedomparty.on.ca/membersapp.htm](http://www.freedomparty.on.ca/membersapp.htm) ; for Fp Canada: [www.freedomparty.ca/htm/en/membersapp.htm](http://www.freedomparty.ca/htm/en/membersapp.htm) ).

**Q. If I am a member of Fp Ontario, does that mean I am *automatically* a member of Fp Canada?**

A. No. Just like in other parties in Canada, provincial membership is separate from federal membership. To be a member of Fp Canada, you must join Fp Canada (call 1-800-830-3301 for an Application Form, or visit the web site to get one there: [www.freedomparty.ca](http://www.freedomparty.ca)).

**Q. Do I have to join Fp Canada if I want to be a member of Fp Ontario? Vice versa?**

A. No. If you are eligible, you can join either, neither, or both parties. For example, you could be a member of the federal NDP (we're not quite sure why you would want to be, but this is just an example), and also be a member of Fp Ontario. Similarly, you could be a member of the Ontario NDP and also be a member of Fp Canada.

**Q. If I am a member of Fp Ontario, Fp Canada, or Fp USA, am I *automatically* a member of Fp International?**

A. At present, you will receive all publications and mailers by Fp International unless you request otherwise: you will, for example, continue to receive issues of Consent, which will now be published by Fp International. This does not mean you are a *member* of Fp International: at present, nobody except the Fp Ontario executive is a member of Fp International. Details about membership in Fp International (e.g., whether it is automatic or voluntary, free or paid, etc.) are being worked out, and we'll keep you posted. Your input and opinions on this matter are encouraged and welcome. In the meantime, you will continue to receive the same publications that Fp Ontario has always provided to you as a member of Fp Ontario.

**SUMMARY**

To answer the question posed by the title of this article - "What's happening to Your Freedom Party?" - the answer is: we're growing larger and more well-organized! As Fp does so, if you have any questions or concerns about Fp Ontario, or any other Fp organization, please do not hesitate to write or call. We need and will benefit from your input as Fp continues to grow.