



Do everyone a favour
this year and get your
flu shot.

Brought to
ASSOCIATION
MÉDICALE
CANADIENNE

NEWS

Liberal Party employs elite fundraising 'bundlers' while broadening grassroots

By TIM NAUMETZ APR. 20, 2016



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, pictured March 22 at a Hill party after releasing his government's federal budget, and top officials in the Liberal Party are promising special recognition for 'bundlers' who can round up at least ten people willing to donate the legal maximum to the party each year. The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright

<https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://www.hilltimes-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/2016/04/20/liberal-party-employs-elite-fundraising-bundlers-while-broadening-grassroots/59112>

<https://twitter.com/intent/tweet/?text=Liberal Party employs elite fundraising 'bundlers' while broadening grassroots&url=https://www.hilltimes-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/2016/04/20/liberal-party-employs-elite-fundraising-bundlers-while-broadening-grassroots/59112&via=thehilltimes>

0

(/reuse-permissions/)



The Liberal Party has adopted a new elite category for fundraising that encourages "bundling"—a U.S. term for networking among well-connected contacts to round up donations for presidential candidates—as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his top party officers also move to open the party's doors to a sea of grassroots supporters who were crucial in the 2015 federal election.

Your group subscription includes premium access to Politics This Morning briefing. Email address: Subscribe



The Liberal website describes the new fundraising class—called the Leader's Circle—as offering “recognition opportunities” for Liberals who recruit a minimum of 10 persons annually into the Laurier Club, the top class of Liberal donors who contribute the Canada Elections Act maximum, \$1,525 each per person for this calendar year.

“With limits on political fundraising, donor networking and bundling are of the utmost importance to growing the Party. Leader's Circle members play an essential role in the mission to grow the Liberal movement and promote Liberal values across the country,” says a description of the new fundraising category.

Rewards for recruiting newcomers or renewals to the Laurier Club include “an annual dinner with the Leader and invitations to events and discussions with leaders within the party.”

Nanos Research pollster Nik Nanos was unaware the U.S. “bundler” system of mass contributions had been employed in Canada.

“I haven't heard of it in Canada,” he said.

Opensecrets.org, a Washington, D.C., watchdog over election contributions and financing, reported that 769 bundlers for President Barack Obama's presidential campaign in 2012 gathered together a total of at least \$186.5 million in contributions. Joint fundraising committees in the U.S. have been employed to split up contributions between candidates to avoid exceeding limits for any one candidate, Opensecrets.org reports.

The term came up when President Obama honoured Canada and Mr. Trudeau with a White House state dinner last month, and the New York Times later corrected names on a list of fundraising bundlers President Obama had invited to earlier state dinners.

The new fundraising connection to Mr. Trudeau is similar to other party networking techniques that have drawn on the sweeping Liberal election win last October, and the overwhelming public fascination with the new Liberal leader.

“Think of the Laurier club as the Liberal establishment. What this looks like is, the Liberals want to add a new dimension to the Liberal establishment and to connect it directly to the current leader,” Mr. Nanos said.

Other recent developments in the Liberal party, reflect the party's confidence as it presses ahead with its sweeping constitutional overhaul, Mr. Nanos said.

Those developments include wider networking, an April 15 report to party members and supporters that more than 80,000 volunteers took part in the 2015 Liberal election campaign, 16,800 under the age of 30 with 9,800 new volunteers since the election—and the party now describing itself as “one progressive movement that the world is watching.”

“I would expect that Trudeau and the people around him look at the structure of the party and say ‘wow, this is old-fashioned, it's time to modernize,’ and they're taking advantage of the fact that he's coming off a majority win, his numbers are very strong, in order to do whatever they like,” Mr. Nanos said.

“The reality is that no one's going to question a sitting prime minister who has come off a majority win, whose numbers are sky-high in the polls, no one is going to question changes to the party and if they do, woe to their political future,” he said.

“This is the new paradigm, where citizens don't support parties but they became followers of leaders, this like Facebook, this is the Facebook paradigm of politics that is emerging,” said Mr.

Your group subscription includes premium access to Politics This Morning briefing



Nanos.

"The Liberals are probably more interested in having followers than people who self-identify as supporters. Followers denote a certain higher level of engagement. In that model, it's all about the network, which is where the fundraising bundlers come in, what network can they bring and what followers can they bring to what the Liberals are trying to do, build a movement around Justin Trudeau," he said.

The historic internal transformation is contained in a new 17-page, party constitution Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his closest advisers and party officers have prepared to present next month to a national Liberal convention, which could replace traditional political party membership for the Liberals with a system allowing anyone who signs up as a Registered Liberal to engage in party affairs, including policy development and candidate nominations for federal elections.

The Hill Times reported last Friday that the new constitution could be controversial within the party, as it also proposes to entrench exclusive authority for Mr. Trudeau (Papineau, Que.), and successive Liberal leaders, to appoint the party's national committee, which would have the power to establish election candidate nomination rules, rules for vetting candidates, dispute settlements and election readiness.

The document also includes a clause that gives a newly constituted national board of directors, led by the leader and the president of the party, authority to establish a national policy development process that has the "flexibility to accommodate changing technology, conditions and electoral lifecycles" while ensuring input from registered Liberals into election policy development.

But, despite the approaching May 26 through May 28 national convention in Winnipeg, emailed requests for interviews with the president of the federal Liberal association in Ontario, the resident of the Quebec federal Liberal association, the Nova Scotia Liberal association, four Liberal electoral district association presidents and the president of the northern district of the Ontario association were not answered.

tnaumetz@hilltimes.com

The Hill Times

RELATED STORIES



FEB 14, 2018

Liberal VP and Trudeau insider Suzanne Cowan gunning for top party job
(<https://www-hilltimes-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/2018/02/14/liberal-party-vice-president-gunning-top-job/134320>)



AUG 2, 2017

Tories outpace Grit fundraising, but Liberals tighten the gap (<https://www-hilltimes-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/2017/08/02/tories-outpace-grit-fundraising-liberals-tighten-gap/115175>)



DEC 9, 2016

The Liberal Party goes on fundraising blitz in early anticipation of 2019 federal election (<https://www-hilltimes-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/2016/12/09/liberal-party-goes-fundraising-blitz-early-anticipation-2019-federal-election/90661>)



AUG 8, 2016

Kellie Leitch's fundraising success indicates deep shift in party dynamics
(<https://www-hilltimes-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/2016/08/08/kellie-leitchs-fundraising-success-indicates-deep-shift-in-party-dynamics/76197>)

AUG 24, 2015

Court documents 'validate' allegations of PMO involvement in committee business: fundraiser (<https://www-hilltimes-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/2015/08/24/court-documents-validate-allegations-of-pmo-involvement-in-committee-business-fundraiser>)

Your group subscription includes premium content

✕