

New York Prohibitionist



Think NY Vote Dry

October- December 2025

Volume 8 #7

A Vision for the Future

In these trying times, the Prohibition Party of New York continues its work to advocate for positive policies and advance social reform. We offer a vision for a better future for New York. A vision for a new approach to governance focused on moral principle, public service, and advancing the public wellbeing. A vision of a state filled with healthy, prospering communities, and greater opportunity for all New Yorkers. If you are interested in helping to make a positive impact on your state and your community, consider joining the Prohibition Party of New York.

"Time and experience do not weaken, but demonstrate more and more the need of a Prohibition Party. Never was the hopelessness of reform in the old parties more apparent than now." William T. Wardwell

State and National News

The Prohibition Party continues to move forward on the state and national level. On the national level, we have continued to make progress in several areas. The Prohibition Party's newspaper, the National Prohibitionist, returned to print with its October 2025 issue; which began arriving to subscribers in the mail in November. On December 5th, the Prohibition National Committee held a conference call to discuss party business, the progress we've made, and our efforts to move forward in 2026 and beyond.

On the state level, the approach of the new year will bring another session of the New York State Legislature, and with it will present fresh opportunities to engage in issue advocacy. The Prohibition Party of New York will continue our work to promote the passage of positive legislation to address the problems of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, improve ballot access laws, improve education, promote holistic economic development, and otherwise advance the health, safety, and wellbeing of New

Yorkers. And we will continue our work of opposing bills and policies that would be harmful to the wellbeing of New Yorkers.

Prohibition National Committee December Conference Call Highlights

On December 5th, the Prohibition National Committee held a conference call to discuss several aspects of party business. Here are some highlights of some of the most notable updates from the conference call.

Chairman Kusnir provided the national committee with reports on party financial matters and discussions with ballot access workers. The Prohibition Party has now been officially registered as a 527 organization. This designation will ensure the continuation of our party's tax-exempt status, which it has traditionally held. Party leadership will continue to look into ballot access workers that we may be able to work with for getting on the ballot in various states for 2028.

The Prohibition Party has made progress in its work to get on the ballot in Alaska for 2028. The Prohibition Party is now officially recognized by the Alaska Division of Elections as a Political Group. This means Alaskan voters can now register their affiliation with the Prohibition Party, and that affiliation will be recorded in the state's voter rolls. We have also been working to gain limited party status in Alaska, which would help us to get on the ballot in 2028. We hired a ballot access worker to gather signatures for us to petition for this status. The signatures were gathered and submitted to the state's elections office. We are currently in the process of waiting for them to finish verifying the signatures. Chairman Kusnir is keeping track of the situation with the state elections officials.

As part of our efforts to get on the ballot in 2028, we will also need to work on finding three people who could serve



as electors in the state. We will continue to work on building up membership in the state and finding residents who can serve as future electors.

There were discussions of organizing efforts in the state of Tennessee. The state has potential for both trying to gain ballot access in the 2028 presidential election and for potentially running candidates for congressional/state offices in future elections. Tennessee's ballot access could allow us to place candidates on the ballot for Congress, Senate, Governor, or State Legislature for a minimum of 25 valid signatures on a candidate petition. Though, the petitioning period is from early January to early March of the election year. We'll look to see if we can find members in the state who may be interested in running for office either in 2026 or in later years.

More broadly, we are working to build up active membership in the state in preparation for 2028. Growing our membership will help improve our pool of those who may be able to volunteer to help with the campaign in the state and those who may be able to serve as electors. We will need to find 11 electors, with one in each of the state's 9 congressional districts and two at-large. We will pursue efforts to grow and develop the party in Tennessee in the coming years.

There were also discussions of broader state-level efforts. The Prohibition Party will work to grow and develop the party in various states; including in New York,

states that we are hoping to potentially get on the ballot in 2028, and other states where active members are interested in working to grow the party in their state.

An update was given on the National Prohibitionist. The National Prohibitionist returned to print with its latest October 2025 Issue. Issues were mailed to those on the mailing list in November. Feedback on the quality of the print issues was positive. The party secretary gave a report on the numbers and costs involved in the printing. There were some discussions about the schedule for future print issues. It was decided that party executive leadership would look further into the costs of different print schedules, as well as relevant funding matters, and come up with a proposed schedule for the national committee to consider.

A vote was held on approving James Clifton to serve as the state contact person for the state of Indiana. The vote was approved unanimously among national committee members present.

Discussions were held on party messaging efforts. Members discussed various ideas for expanding our messaging, which we may seek to use going forward.

There were also discussions drawing up a roadmap for the party; compiling information about the timelines for ballot access, campaign work, and other party goals, to help guide our work going into 2028.

After concluding comments were made, the meeting was adjourned with plans to schedule a future conference call for the national committee in 2026.



Anti-Tobacco Activists Continue Work in Buffalo

Anti-Tobacco activists in the city of Buffalo continue their efforts to try to pass a citywide ban on menthol tobacco products. The group No Menthol Buffalo has been working to try to convince the Buffalo Common Council to pass an ordinance that would prohibit businesses from selling menthol tobacco products within the city. The effort has made some

progress over the past year, but has yet to advance to a vote on passing the proposed ordinance. On November 13th, the group held a rally at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, bringing together youth, public health advocates, and local leaders to encourage the Buffalo Common Council to adopt an ordinance banning the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol.

Congress Passes Ban on Intoxicating Hemp Products

Congress has moved to take action against the sale of THC-based intoxicating hemp products. For context, THC is the main psychoactive ingredient in marijuana, which causes people to get high. Research has found THC to have damaging effects on the brain, in some cases causing drug-induced psychosis, and increases risks of heart and cardiovascular disease. In 2018, Congress passed a farm bill that had contained provisions legalizing various hemp-based THC and CBD products nationwide; including THC-infused products under 0.3% potency. Following this, a variety of THC-based products flooded into shops throughout the country.

In more recent years, some members of Congress had set about seeking to fix this loophole. This effort gained momentum in 2025. In November, the FY2026 Agriculture appropriations act was passed, which included provisions that tightened federal restrictions on hemp. These provisions established stricter standards for hemp products, which will ban most forms of intoxicating hemp products. The 0.3% limit was changed from just measuring delta-9 THC to measuring all variants of THC for the 0.3% cap. Additionally, any finished product intended for ingestion, inhalation, or topical application may not contain more than 0.4% per package, and products made with synthetic or converted cannabinoids are banned. These restrictions would ban most current intoxicating hemp-derived products, including various edibles, beverages, smokable products, vapes, oils, and capsules, delta-8 THC products, delta-10 THC products, and other products containing compounds made from converting CBD into synthetic THC. The FDA is required to publish lists of naturally occurring cannabinoids, THC class

cannabinoids, and all known cannabinoids that have similar effects as THC class cannabinoids, as well as guidances for what counts as a container, within 90 days of the bill's enactment. There will be a one-year transition period for companies to become compliant with the new restrictions.

Sources: https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IN12620https://615c4beb-b241-4f4a-a6b4-a074dc02ce34.filesusr.com/ugd/2cc7be_44df033fa0d241889012eedbc3ab85a3.pdf
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"There can be no settlement of a great cause without discussion, and people will not discuss a cause until their attention is drawn to it."
William Jennings Bryan

Cuomo Defeated in NYC Mayoral Race, Continues Ethical Controversies

Former Governor Andrew Cuomo was defeated in the New York City Mayoral Election in November. Andrew Cuomo is the disgraced former Governor of New York. He was governor from 2011-2021. His governorship was characterized by pushing forward regressive policies which harmed the health, safety, and wellbeing of New Yorkers (especially in the form of pushing pro-alcohol policies, which weakened restrictions on alcohol sales and used state agencies and tax payer money to promote the growth of the alcohol industry, despite the harm that this did to the public), passing anti-democratic changes to the state's election laws, underfunding many schools across the state, and running economic development programs mired with inefficiency and corruption. Governor Cuomo resigned in disgrace after being credibly accused of sexually harassing multiple women, and facing state ethics investigations regarding his conduct during the Coronavirus Pandemic, to avoid facing impeachment by the state legislature. Mr. Cuomo has demonstrated through his record of conduct that he is a man who is morally and ethically unfit for holding major public office.

In 2025, Andrew Cuomo tried to resurrect his political career by running for mayor of New York City. After losing the Democratic Primary to Zohran Mamdani, Andrew Cuomo continued to run in the general election as an independent candidate. The candidates on the general election the ballot included Zohran

Mamdani (Democrat and Working Families), Andrew Cuomo (independent, under Fight and Deliver ballot line name), Curtis Sliwa (Republican and Protect Animal Rights), Eric Adams (independent, under Safe&Affordable/End Antisemitism ballot line name), Irene Estrada (Conservative), Joseph Hernandez (independent, under Quality of Life ballot line name), and Jim Walden (independent, under Integrity ballot line name). Eric Adams and Jim Walden had dropped out of the race after the deadline to be able to remove their names from the ballot; leaving five candidates running on election day.

Zohran Mamdani won the mayoral race with 50.8% of the vote. Cuomo came in second place with 41.3%, Sliwa came in third place with 7.0%, Adams came in 4th place with 0.3%, Estrada came in 5th place with 0.1%, Walden came in 6th place with 0.1%, and Hernandez came in 7th place with 0.1%. Cuomo's defeat in the mayoral election has spared New York City from having to face the damage he could have inflicted over four years.

While Cuomo's attempt at returning to political power has ended, his ethical controversies continue. Since the November Election, the New York City's Campaign Finance Board has been conducting an investigation into allegations that Andrew Cuomo improperly coordinated with superPACs and wealthy businessmen to raise and spend money for his campaign. Complaints allege that Cuomo coordinated with the Put NYC First superPAC to raise 8 million dollars from wealthy businessmen and disbursed it to several other superPACs, spending money to support Cuomo in the mayoral race. SuperPACs are a category of political action committees that are allowed to raise and spend unlimited amounts of money on campaigns, but are not allowed to coordinate with the campaigns of the candidates they support. The investigation is reportedly still ongoing.

Outside of this, Cuomo has continued his legal battles against the State's Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government (COELIG), regarding his \$5 Million COVID-era book deal. Back when he was governor and the state government was dealing with the Coronavirus Pandemic, Andrew Cuomo

created a book about his leadership of the state during the pandemic. He got a \$5.1 million deal for publishing the book. Cuomo was investigated by the State's Joint Committee on Public Ethics (JCOPE), a predecessor organization to the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government, as to whether he had gotten proper ethics approvals for the book and whether he improperly used to state government staffers to help him write the book. JCOPE found that he had improperly used state resources to produce the book and tried to make him repay the money he got in the book deal. Cuomo has spent years fighting court battles against JCOPE and later COELIG, to try to block and bring an end to the ethics investigation against him.

As part of this legal battle, Andrew Cuomo attempted to sue to have the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government declared unconstitutional. The case went to the New York State Court of Appeals, which ruled on the matter in February. The Court of Appeals rejected Cuomo's arguments and ruled that the Commission was constitutional. Judge Jenny Rivera wrote in the majority opinion that,

"Neither the Legislature nor the Executive Branch has undue influence over the Commission, a structural characteristic lawfully chosen to ensure the integrity of the Commissioners and to instill public faith in government".

Following this, Cuomo looked to continue legal efforts to block the State Ethics Commission's investigation into him. In December, Cuomo succeeded in delaying the Commission's investigation over the book deal. COELIG agreed to a temporary restraining order halting its investigation, as the lawsuit continues. Both sides will be due back in court for oral arguments on April 30th, 2026.

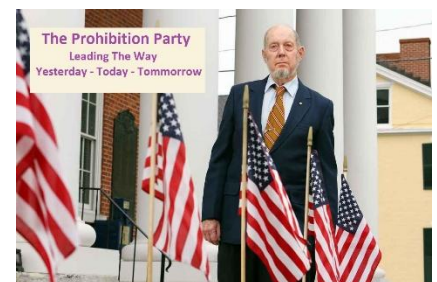
Meanwhile, New York taxpayers continue to shoulder growing costs paying for former-Governor Cuomo's legal defenses in multiple of his sexual harassment lawsuits. There are state laws that entitle state employees to have the state government pay for covering "reasonable litigation expenses" when they have been accused of wrongdoing during their employment. Cuomo made use of these provisions (and the fact that many of the lawsuits for sexual

harassment he allegedly committed while in office) to get the state to cover much of his legal costs while defending against multiple lawsuits from women who have accused him of sexual harassment. The state has now reportedly spent over \$21 million dollars; with \$1.3 million dollars spent from late May to mid-December of this year. His legal expenses reportedly amount to roughly one-third of all money that the state has spent on legal defenses for state employees under that law since 2020.

It remains to be seen how these various legal cases will be resolved. It also remains to be seen whether Andrew Cuomo's defeat has brought about the final end to his attempts to resurrect his political career or whether he may try to return in the future.

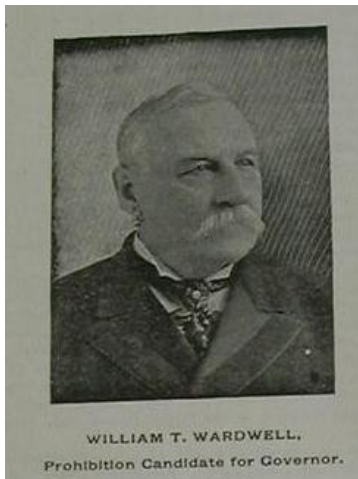
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"Politics is about the improvement of people's lives. It's about advancing the cause of peace and justice in our country and the world. Politics is about doing well for the people." Paul Wellstone



"What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." Jane Goodall

New York Prohibition Party History



William T. Wardwell

William Thomas Wardwell was a New York businessman, oil refiner, and Prohibition Party politician. William Wardwell born in 1827 in Bristol, Rhode Island. His parents were William Taylor Wardwell (who was a mechanic and farmer) and Mary Hawes Wardwell. He was the second of 8 children.

At age 9, the family moved to a farm in Niles, Michigan. Wardwell gained an education from local schools and lessons by his mother. At 13, he moved to Buffalo, New York and became a clerk at an oil business, ran by his uncle, Samuel W. Hawes.

Once Wardwell came of age, he started his own oil business. At the time, the oil business was being transformed by the rise of petroleum-based oil. Petroleum had been discovered in Pennsylvania. Wardwell recognized and seized on the opportunity presented. He established a large petroleum refinery in Buffalo, which proved to be successful. He then moved to New York City. He established another oil refinery, Pioneer Oil Refinery, at Hunter's Point in Long Island, as a center refining and exporting oil. By 1875, the Pioneer Oil refinery had become one of the largest refineries in the Eastern United States. In 1875, he sold the Pioneer Oil Refinery to the emerging Standard Oil Company.

After selling the Pioneer Oil Refinery, Wardwell purchased a controlling interest in the Devoe Manufacturing Company and became its treasurer. The Devoe Manufacturing Company was an oil company, which exported oil to foreign markets.

Around the same time, John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company, which would become the nation's leading oil company, was in its early stages of development. Given his prominence in the oil industry, Wardwell was recruited to become one of the early key figures in the company. He served Standard Oil in various capacities, including serving as treasurer from at least 1893 to around 1901.

In 1853, Wardwell had married his first wife, Eliza W. (Lantermann) Wardwell. They had 8 children, with 2 surviving to adulthood: a son, Allen, and a daughter. Eliza Wardwell died in 1887. And in 1889, he married his second wife, Martha (Wallace) Wardwell. While living in the New York City, he had been involved in a variety of charitable and cultural institutions. He was president of the New York Red Cross Hospital, donated to various charities, and was a member of the National Arts Club, the New York Zoological Gardens, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New England Society, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the New York Chamber of Commerce.

William Wardwell had been a strong supporter of temperance and prohibition. He became drawn to the cause after attending a series of temperance meetings at Chickering Hall in New York City. He was involved with the National Temperance Society and the American Temperance Union. At some point he served as director of the National Temperance Society and at some point served as treasurer of the American Temperance Union.

Wardwell had initially been a staunch Democrat, but his support for prohibitionist policies lead him to join the Prohibition Party in 1884. After joining the party, he quickly rose to become a prominent prohibitionist in New York, as well as a significant financial supporter of the party.

In 1886, Wardwell ran as the Prohibition Party candidate for Mayor of New York City. He received 532 votes and 0.24% of the vote. In 1888, he ran for Mayor of New York City again. He received 832 votes and 0.31% of the total vote. In 1887, Wardwell served as county chairman of the Party in New York County. In 1888, Wardwell began serving as a member of the Prohibition Party's

national committee for New York. He served on the national committee from 1888-1908.

In 1890, Wardwell was the Prohibition Party candidate for New York City Comptroller. He received 1,298 votes and 0.31% of the total vote. Around 1892, Wardwell became the national secretary of the Prohibition Party and served as secretary for at least 8 years.

In 1896, Prohibition Party was affected by a dispute between the Broad-Gauge and Narrow-Gauge factions of the party. The Narrow-Gauge factions wanted the party to hold a platform that was solely or almost exclusively focused on the issue of Prohibition. While the Broad-Gauge faction wanted a broader platform, which included positions on other major issues. This led to a temporary split in the party, where two rival Prohibition Party presidential tickets were nominated, and the party's overall results decreased from its 1892 results. Wardwell had sided with the Narrow-Gauge Faction. In the 1896, he was one of the electors for the presidential ticket of Joshua Levering and Hale Johnson in New York.

In 1897, Wardwell ran for Mayor of New York City for a third time. He advocated for having New York City take stronger action against the liquor traffic. In describing Wardwell, the *Standard Union* newspaper wrote, "He believed that public opinion was not, like a rock, immovable, but could be brought to take the Prohibitionists view of the right way of holding the saloon and its consequent evils in check." He stated that if elected he would administer the city honestly, and only appoint prohibitionists to the position of police commissioners.

On election day, he received 1,359 votes and 0.26% of the total vote.

In 1900, the Prohibition Party nominated Wardwell as it's candidate for governor of New York. Wardwell ran under the platform that focused on opposition to the liquor traffic and support for prohibitionist policies. Wardwell criticized New York's Raines Law: A law which taxed liquor sales, and banned the sale of alcohol on Sundays for some places that sold alcohol, but which was poorly designed and allowed saloons to largely get around it by exploiting loopholes in the law. Wardwell contended

that it was time for people to act to advance prohibitionist policies.

In his letter of acceptance for the nomination, Wardwell made the following statements:

"I can only say, if the people of this State ratify this choice and shall elect me Governor, I will in loyalty to the spirit of the Prohibition Party, to the best of my ability, give to the people of this State an honest, practical, business like administration, seeking only to establish and conserve that which will be for the best interest for this State and the people thereof. An administration unconcerned by "bosses" and over which the arrogance and blighting influence of the liquor interest will have no power".

"Time and experience do not weaken, but demonstrate more and more the need of a Prohibition Party. Never was the hopelessness of reform in the old parties more apparent than now."

"We believe a new day has dawned, one in which moral principle shall have a voice in party politics, and righteousness, the righteousness which exalteth the nation, shall control in civic government."

"It is a time for Prohibitionists to hold fast to their convictions"

Wardwell held various speeches and campaign events throughout the state during his campaign.

He reportedly spent \$3,855 over the course of his campaign for Governor. The breakdown of those expenses are: \$700 to Prohibition Party national committee, \$1,200 to state committee, \$360 to the New York County Committee, \$450 to the defender (a Prohibition Newspaper), \$110 to the Young People's Prohibition League, \$100 to the lecturer C.H. Mead, \$125 for Prohibition newspapers and books for distribution, and \$340 for incidentals.

Wardwell received 22,704 votes, 1.47% of the total vote, and came in third place. This was an increase from the 18,383 votes by the party's 1898 candidate for governor.

Towards the end of his life, Wardwell suffered from occasional "attacks indicating a weak heart". On January 3rd, 1911, Wardwell died of heart disease.

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John Cunneen



Did you know that the Prohibition Party helped to elect a New York State attorney general?

In 1902, lawyer John Cunneen was nominated for state Attorney General by both the Democratic and Prohibition Parties. He was elected with 48.8% of the vote and served one term as Attorney general.

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The Need for Restricting Commerce

The prosperity of a society is not merely based in its material wealth, but in the wellbeing, quality of life, security, and cultivation of its people. The conduct of business and commerce is a major aspect of economic activity. It's important for the provision of many products and services and employment of many people. But the conduct of business and commerce is not necessarily a good thing, and does not always benefit the public. Its quality is dependent on what is being done, the merits of it, and its effect upon people. The primary function of a business is to generate profit and income for those who run it. In the process, it may end up benefiting others and the public at large. But that is not always the case. If those engaging in commerce are overcome by greed, indifferent to moral responsibility, and/or indifferent to the effects their actions have on others, and are not restricted by ethical standards, they can end up conducting business in ways that are dishonest, which cause harm to people, and which negatively impact society at large. Both history and present-day societies are full of examples of the evils that can come when greed and inhumanity are allowed to operate. Whether that be the antebellum

institution of slavery (which abused and exploited millions of people for the profit of slaveholders), the alcohol and tobacco industry killing millions of people a year worldwide with their poisonous products, the inhuman exploitation of people by human traffickers, or any number of other unjust and exploitive actions.

Our republic was established so the people of our society could come together to protect our rights and advance our common interests. It was established not merely to protect us from the tyranny of a monarch, but to protect us from the tyranny of abusive actions of individuals and private entities. When someone's actions cause harm to people, violate their human rights, or commit some grave wrong, they become a matter of public interest. The people have the legitimate ability to come together to establish rules restricting behaviors, to protect their lives, rights, and vital wellbeing against the abusive actions of individuals and private entities. This principle applies to the actions of people in business and commerce. This is why there needs to be laws that regulate and restrict business and commercial practices. A well-designed and well-enforced system of commercial laws (which sets standards of honest business practices, combats fraudulent behavior, promotes fair relations between employers and employees, and businesses and consumers, sets rules for the protection of the health and safety of people, prohibits harmful products, and prohibits the inhumane exploitation of people for profit) can work to greatly reduce various social ills and improve the wellbeing and prosperity of the public.

This understanding has long been expressed by supporters of alcohol prohibition. Alcohol is a toxic substance, which harms people and society. The commercial alcohol industry not only produces and supplies the harmful substance which causes these damages, but promotes its increased and continued use through, and works to oppose efforts to combat the harm of alcohol, for the sake of their own profit. As such, prohibitionists have advocated for laws to ban the commercial production and sale of alcohol. The principled prohibitionist is an enemy of unrestricted commerce and greed, and a friend of honest business and ethical legislation.