

Kentucky Republicans - Election Malpractice

Every 4 years the Republican Party of Kentucky issues a “Call to Reorganize for Precinct Committee Elections”. The 120 counties of Kentucky have now been told to hold those elections between June 1st and July 1st. Every Republican, in each of the 3,692 precincts in Kentucky, is entitled to vote to elect 3 precinct officers to represent their precinct to their county party. The problem is that the process is a big secret kept from all but a few Republican insiders.

For Immediate Release

(Wilmore, KY) May 17, 2021 -- “What if you had an election and no one told you about it? ? What if no one knew what the election was for? What if no one knew where and when they should vote?” These are questions raised by Bob Barney owner of the website www.takeovergop.com.

Over the past 2 months Barney, a resident and Republican volunteer in Jessamine County, has been calling and surveying Republican voters in his own county. Having spoken to over 450 Republicans about the upcoming precinct elections he has confirmed what he has known for years--that the vast majority of Republican voters have no clue how their party is organized or how its leadership is elected. The details are buried in the 40 page “Official Rules of the Republican Party of Kentucky”, found here:

<http://www.rpk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/RPK-Rules-Amended-by-Exec.-Comm.-3.27.21-.pdf>

Barney stated, “The problem for any lay person is to figure out this complicated legal mess. Unraveling the mystery starts on page 16 of the rules with this statement:

“6.03 The Precinct shall be the basic organizational unit of the Republican Party of Kentucky.”

Barney went on, “It is clear that the party hides this process from ordinary Republicans. Worse, if asked about it, the party is either silent or spreads disinformation about how it actually works”.

In speaking with voters by phone in Jessamine County, Barney asks a question, “Do you know what a precinct captain is and does?” To the over 90% who say no, Barney explains:

Republicans in each voting precinct are allowed to elect 3 Republican Precinct captains. In Jessamine County we have 36 precincts, so that’s 108 captains. The elected Precinct captains form a group that is called the “County Committee”. The County Committee is the governing body of the Jessamine County Republican party. The first thing that the County committee does is it elects the 5 County Officers, the two most important officers are the Chairman and Vice Chairman. Those two then serve as our representatives on the State Republican committee which determines the direction of the Republican Party here in Kentucky.

After the explanation, 75% of those that Barney has spoken to have indicated that they want to participate and vote in the precinct elections. About 30% have expressed interest in running to become precinct captains.

But most counties are not eager to tell Republicans about their precinct elections. Barney points to McCracken County (Paducah) as a prime example. McCracken has a chair person who is actively

blocking Republicans from being involved. When asked by a Republican in her county for a list of Republicans in her precinct, the chair flatly denied the request.

Barney became aware of the situation because of his website, www.takeovergop.com. There he encourages all Republicans to get involved in their county parties and these elections. Those who join the site are introduced to other like-minded people in their counties and encouraged to work together to get elected as precinct captains.

Tabitha Morris, a resident of McCracken County, contacted Barney in February looking to organize with others in her County. Morris recently reached out by email to McCracken County chair Cheryl Grana telling Grana that she is a candidate for precinct captain and asking Grana for a canvassing “walking list” of Republicans in her precinct. Grana flatly denied the request in writing, giving an explanation that was misleading. Since the denial of a walking list to Morris, Barney became aware of two other precinct captain candidates who have also been denied walking lists by McCracken County’s chair and vice chair.

Barney was so disturbed by Grana’s actions that he wrote and complained to Mac Brown, chairman of the Republican Party of Kentucky. Receiving no response Barney sent two more follow-up emails; all of which have been ignored. Individual complaints made by the Republicans of McCracken County to Mac Brown have been met with delays and obstructions by the RPK. Barney revealed that the latest obstruction is RPK’s new requirement that the precinct candidates in McCracken sign a 5 page legal agreement to get a walking list. Barney stated, “The demand to sign this complicated legal agreement is excessive and malicious. The agreement is so one sided that no one in their right mind should ever sign it.” Barney is convinced that the Republicans in McCracken are being trifled with by the county leaders and the state party in order to run the clock out and not give them an opportunity to campaign in time for McCracken’s June 5th precinct elections.

Barney stated, “What I have witnessed underlines my view and personal experience that the leadership of the Republican Party of Kentucky is a rubber stamp puppet bureaucracy under the direction and control of Senator Mitch McConnell. The last thing that this bunch want is for the rank and file members of the Republican Party to get involved in the political machinery that is run for the benefit of a select group of Republican politicians and not others. These people run the Republican Party like it is their own private country club.”

Barney concluded, “The most fundamental aspect of our democracy is the election process, which ironically has faced a lot of scrutiny from Republicans since the 2020 election. In this glaring example the hypocrisy cannot be ignored. The Republican Party of Kentucky is holding its own party elections in an environment of secrecy and when members try to become involved they are ignored, given misleading and erroneous information, obstructed and sent on wild goose chases. The Republican Party of Kentucky is dirty and it needs to be cleaned up.”

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