

1- Would you eliminate ex-officio delegates?

My position is the same that expressed by Jason Chaffetz et al in 2006: “Let’s all support removal of the “Automatic and Appointed Delegate” from the Utah Republican Party system.” (See <http://www.grassrootsgopdelegates.org/images/AutoDelegateLetter.pdf>.) I’m not certain the Chair has the power to directly remove ex-officio (automatic) and appointed delegates, but I would seek to employ a process under the rules so that this action might be taken.

The Party Constitution in Article XII Section 1 provides only one primary mechanism to select delegates. This mechanism is election in a precinct caucus. The Party’s parliamentary authority, Robert’s Rules, specifies that when rules “authorize certain things specifically, other things of the same class are thereby prohibited.” In this instance the Constitution, by specifying that delegates shall be selected through election in a precinct caucus, thereby prohibits any other selection method such as automatic assignment or appointment.

Insistence on fidelity to this rule by county parties does not represent an “imposition by the state” or an “attack on local control” as some have mischaracterized it. The Party Constitution was put into effect in 1994 by the state delegates assembled in Convention. The Constitution was adopted by the state delegates for their benefit and to limit and control the power of both the state party and county parties.

These delegates desired the Utah Republican Party to be universally a grassroots Party. Because of this they chose to adopt a method at that time and through subsequent amendments for selecting delegates in precinct caucuses that is exclusive to all other approaches. This method is desirable because it helps to ensure that both state party and county parties remain accountable and subordinate to grassroots delegates.

If elected Chair I will work with all 29 county parties to facilitate their compliance with the rules. One of the rules that is not being followed is the requirement to provide the “basis of eligibility” for each delegate. (Was the delegate elected in a precinct caucus or appointed as a replacement by the precinct chair, or was an unauthorized method used such as appointment by the County Party Chair?) Compliance with this requirement is essential to determine the magnitude of the problem of unauthorized delegates.

Once the basis of eligibility is known then a foundation for a credentials challenge can be established. Under Robert’s Rules the Convention delegates have the power to decide if delegates should be seated. I will appoint Credentials Committee members who will adhere to an objective reading and application of the rules. In my belief should county parties face the possibility of not having some of their delegates seated because they were not elected in precinct caucuses, their motivation to bring their rules and process into compliance would increase.

I would like to point out that I have a track record on this issue. In 2004 I worked with several other grassroots members of the Weber County Republican Party to bring the Party’s Bylaws

into compliance with the rules and end automatic and appointed state delegates. Since that time many of the strong opponents of this change have now become supporters of it. The contention created by automatic delegates has been relieved by electing all state delegates in precinct caucuses as required by the rules.

2- Would you oppose the veto power?

The “veto power” is with reference to a constitutional amendment that was passed by the State Central Committee (SCC) 50-25 on December 4, 2010. This amendment gave a simple majority of the SCC the power to veto any Constitutional amendment adopted by at least 2/3 of the delegates at the state convention.

As a member of the SCC, I was one of the 25 to oppose the adoption of veto power. I also rose to speak against it, and counseled the amendment’s supporters to vote against it because grassroots opposition was likely. I informed the SCC that this amendment was comparable to others that had been passed in previous years and had been rejected by state delegates.

Nonetheless, the amendment was approved by just enough votes to meet the 2/3 requirement. Subsequently supporters of the amendment, including incumbent Chair Thomas Wright, determined that it was a political loser. The amendment was redirected at the most recent SCC meeting in Fillmore to the Constitution/Bylaws Committee. This Committee then refused to postpone it indefinitely (kill it) making it possible for it to be brought forward once again.

The amendment is significant because it indicates the disregard shown by the SCC for actions of delegates at the state convention. The supporters of the amendment were unclear as to what specific actions that had been or might be taken by the delegates that should be vetoed by the SCC.

My suspicion is that the genesis of the amendment goes back to 2001 when a delegate sponsored amendment was approved by the Convention to block Democrats from voting in Republican primaries. Though this was broadly supported by grassroots Republicans, I believe that the Republican elite did not view this action favorably and would have preferred that the SCC could have vetoed it.

Another significant aspect of the amendment pertains to the philosophy of at least some SCC members. Because the Party Constitution states that the SCC is the “governing” body of the Party, they understand this to mean that they have the authority to govern the state delegates and have the power to reject any actions taken by the state delegates with which they disagree. Under this interpretation the few are empowered to govern and control the many.

My philosophy and understanding of the Party rules differs from this. I believe that the state delegates govern the SCC through their final power to adopt and amend the Party Constitution, from which the SCC obtains its authority. The SCC members must be accountable to the state delegates and county delegates who are involved with their selection. By our rules the SCC is

subordinate to the power of the state delegates and I will do everything in my lawful power as Chair to ensure that the SCC does not exceed its authority.