The Spiritual Battle Inside The MTGOP?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



By Doug Bohn Ravalli County

"Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." - John Adams

What Is The MT GOP

he Montana Grand Old Party (MTGOP), AKA Montana Republican Party, not surprisingly, is a bit of an enigma to many people. The MTGOP makes an appearance during the Two-year election cycle, and fades into obscurity until the next cycle. Ultimately, the MTGOP is a PRIVATE political party sanctioned by the State of Montana.

The Structure

At top of the MTGOP sits the Chairman, currently Don Kaldschmidt (Don K.) of Whitefish, accompanied by various administrative officers including Secretary, Treasure, etc. In addition, multiple committees, standing committees, special committees etc. are appointed from among the members of the MTGOP. These committee members are a mix of elected representatives and a few are employees of the MTGOP. All members are appointed by the MTGOP Chairman or executive board.

The foundation of this private political organization is composed of members of what are known as "Central Committees". Central Committees are authorized and regulated by the State of Montana. Each county is authorized to have Central Committees representing each political party recognized by Montana. The purpose of these committees is to represent their constituents to the state and national level party leadership. Central Committees consist of one man and one woman representing each precinct within their county.

What "authority" is granted to Central Committees? CCs are empowered to make their own rules which cannot be in conflict with state statutes (yes there are Montana laws that regulate state parties) and the state level party rules and each party is allowed to elect their own leadership. Only Central Committees are authorized to submit election judges to the county election supervisor. Members participate in electing party leadership and constructing the party platforms. In addition, CCs nominate candidates to fill elected positions held by a member of their party when the term of office is not fulfilled due to resignation or death of an elected official.

The Regulation

This in itself, is an oddity. Political parties are private organizations as confirmed by courts at multiple levels throughout the United States. Which poses this question: Should the

government be allowed to regulate political entities in a Constitutional Republic? The obvious answer to this is **NO!**

The same level of regulation that applies to any other private organization should apply to political parties. Follow the laws of the Country and State, period. Yet, in Montana, regulation of PRIVATE political parties has been the name-of-the-game since early on in our history. Regulation quickly becomes manipulation of the political parties by "The State" in Montana. Envision a private organization you belong to. The VFW, The Elks, The Eagles, The NRA, a Bridge club, use your imagination being told by the state how you must go about electing your members.

By state law-Montana Code Annotated (MCA), in order to be a precinct member of the county central committee, you must file to run for election in the June primary. However, Montana is an open primary state which means, anyone voting in the June Primary Election, regardless of whether they are an independent or a supporter of a different party, may choose to vote for a Republican Precinct Committeeperson. The voter may, or may not, agree with the platform of the party, have any interest or knowledge of the party, but gets to elect the voting members of the party at the county level. This alone is reason enough to revert back to declared parties and closed primaries.

The State passed a law stating "Vacancies in the office of precinct committee representative occur only on the death or written resignation of the incumbent or when the incumbent is no longer a resident or registered voter of the precinct. A precinct committee representative may not otherwise be removed from office." That's right, the office of precinct representative is the only non-impeachable office in our entire Constitutional Republic form of Government! So, if it is discovered that a, or a number of, precinct rep(s), who were elected by the general public to this private organization, vehemently disagree(s) with the very foundation the organization is formed to uphold there is absolutely nothing the organization can legally do to remove them. An example of this is contained in the following body of this work.

What It Has Become

The choices and decisions coming from the MTGOP especially since 2016 have shocked most who are closest to the organization. Those being the members of the County Republican Central Committees (RCCs).

As explained, RCCs are a subsidiary of the MTGOP. RCC members logically assumed the MTGOP would embrace the changing tide in the Republican party that began in 2016, led by President Trump. That they would, of course,

display the qualities of integrity, honesty, loyalty and of course abide by the law, and adopt rules that strengthened and supported the RCC's mission. After all, they're the good guys, right? THAT ASSUMPTION COULD NOT BE MORE WRONG! The following is an account of some of the MTGOP's latest actions.

In 2023 the MTGOP chose to change the rules mandating when RCCs hold their county conventions to elect their leadership. The change moved the convention dates from spring to between October to December. The significance of this move had wide ramifications. Electing county central committee officers is important because certain officers are the only ones with the ability to vote for State level GOP officers at the June MT GOP convention. Changing the dates didn't allow new officers to be seated and to have the ability to vote for state level GOP officers. This kept many America First central committees from being able to vote which favored establishment candidates for state level GOP officer positions.

The MTGOP knew this rule change was in direct conflict with state law MCA 13-38-205 which reads: "(1) The county central committee shall meet prior to the state convention of its political party and organize by electing a presiding officer and one or more vice presiding officers." This meeting, prior to the state convention, is known as the County Convention.

The MTGOP claimed that MT State Law allowed the parties to make their own rules; therefore, this rule change was ok to do. By choosing to ignore clearly articulated State law on when conventions are to be held, the MT GOP refused to recognize the results of Ravalli County's Republican Central Committee's convention that was held according to state law in the spring prior to the state convention.

This change ensured the legacy RCC leadership would select the MTGOP leadership for the 2024 election cycle. A blatant example of voter suppression and manipulation. There are many who believe the MTGOP took this action out of fear of the America First movement that was capturing the RCCs across the state.

Despite state statutes confirming the MTGOP was in violation of the law by making their rule change on when RCC Officers should be elected, the MTGOP proceeded to hold its state convention in clear violation of MT State law which required the election of officers convention to be held prior to the state GOP convention.

While numerous RCCs brought objections to the MTGOP violation of the law, led largely by Ravalli County who had held their convention in compliance with State law, the MTGOP refused to recognize those RCCs who were in compliance with the law, claiming those RCCs had "violated the rules" while ignoring that the new MT GOP Rules were in violation with Montana State Law. Forcing the all MT RCCs to violate the law as well. The result was Don K. being re-elected as chairman of the MTGOP by a very narrow margin. (Now is it any wonder why the MTGOP chose to do nothing to support honest, fair, legal and transparent elections in Montana?)

Bottom line - The majority of the current MTGOP leadership and their minions are adamantly Anti-America First and are willing to commit criminal acts to preserve their **power.** The MTGOP, through these actions, has proven they are willing to violate or simply ignore the law, change the rules and use all means necessary to preserve their authority. Not a moral quality.

Under the leadership of Don K, citizen's right of self-governance and representation to the MTGOP continues to be trounced. That is the reason why many good conservatives refuse to be associated with the Republican Party. Modifying the rules mid-stream to favor establishment candidates and violating the law to suit their goals is why the Tea Party and Constitution Party's started. These violations are becoming standard practice for the MTGOP.

The latest decision violates not only state law MCA 13-38-202(4) which reads; "*Each* precinct committee representative serves a term of 2 years from the date of election or appointment pursuant to 13-38-201. Once the term has expired, the position becomes vacant", it also violates the MTGOP's own rules!

This decision stems from a complaint brought by a member of the Ravalli County Republican Central Committee. This committee member, Mr. Tony Hudson, who has his sights set on becoming the next MTGOP Chairman, was elected through the process described above and refuses to confirm his allegiance to uphold the principles that define a Republican published in the Montana Republican Party platform. In turn, this committee member submitted to the MT GOP Chair, nine complaints against the Ravalli Republican Central Committee. Of the nine complaints, all were dismissed except for the one pertaining to when a precinct person is considered elected.

That complaint claimed the regularly scheduled meeting of the Ravalli County Republican Central Committee held on June 11th, 2024 was The RCRCC is now embroiled in a power invalid because the election held the previous week was not yet certified, a common and historically regular occurrence around election days.

To accommodate Mr. Hudson, the MTGOP

Chairman-appointed "rules committee" proceeded to proclaim that they possessed the authority to decide what rules are to be followed, even if it violates state law or their own bylaws. This rules committee inexplicably determined that EVERY ELECTED REPUBLICAN PRECINCT REPRESENTATIVE in the State serves at the whim of the MTGOP not as defined by state law. This committee decided the two-year term of office for precinct representatives ends on election DAY. Not on the conclusion of two years as defined in state law-which **is when an election is certified.** For the entire history of our state, terms of office have concluded either upon the certification of the appropriate election -OR- upon the swearingin of the newly elected officials. Never has "Election Day" determined a "term-of-office. **Until Now!**

The convoluted reasoning this rules committee applied is Precinct Representatives are governed by the rules of the political party, not state law. This, in spite of the fact that Precinct Representatives are governed by the same laws and rules that apply to any and every candidate on the ballot in every primary election across the state. Their election undergoes the same scrutiny any other elected office does and is certified in the same manner of every other election.

Yet, the rules committee, with the guidance of the top officials in the MTGOP seem to believe that they can preclude the lawful two-year term and remove Precinct Representatives from **their office** in direct violation of state law **MCA** 13-38-202 quoted again here: "(5) Vacancies in the office of precinct committee representative occur only on the death or written resignation of the incumbent or when the incumbent is no longer a resident or registered voter of the precinct. A precinct committee representative may not otherwise be removed from office." This rules committee has displayed through its ruling, that they have no regard for the law, tradition. or for maintaining continuity of government. This ruling leaves ALL Precincts unrepresented and halts all business from election day through certification of the election. We have all seen certifications that can take months to resolve.

The reader must remember this action centered around Ravalli County Republican Central Committee (RCRCC), (long referred to by the MTGOP as their Crown Jewel due to the county's exceptional Republican voting record) who in 2023 overwhelmingly elected America First aligned candidates into leadership.

struggle with the MTGOP supported legacy leadership including Mr. Terry Nelson, the former chair of the RCRCC and now secretary of the MTGOP. Mr Nelson's leadership gave Ravalli County the leadership of the Solutions (read Surrender) Caucus. The Solutions Caucus are establishment Republicans and

perhaps even Democrats claiming to be Republicans.

The Surrender Caucus very effectively undermined the Republican "Supermajority" and specifically the Freedom Caucus during the 2023 legislature. This "solution-caucus" mindset, supported by Mr. Nelson, fielded many precinct committee people to the RCRCC through this last primary. These new members all adamantly refuse to pledge to uphold the Montana Republican Platform even though they claimed to represent Republicans when they signed up to run for the RCRCC.

One would ask why would the MTGOP be so willing to blatantly disregard State Law, their own rules and historical tradition? The reason is the same one that propelled them to violate State Law, forcing the RCCs to hold their conventions AFTER the MTGOP leadership convention in 2023. I believe, the majority of the current MTGOP leadership is VEHEMENTLY ANTI-AMERICA **FIRST!** The MTGOP continues to deny that the Republican party is now Trump's party. Rather than riding the wave of a historic Republican victory in November, the MTGOP is desperately trying to keep their ship the USS Uni-party upright and intact.

Why is the MTGOP so desperate? **President** Trump clearly states his intent for the coming administration. As he said during his first inauguration in 2016: "We are returning the power back to the people". Nothing terrifies those who have spent years building a controlling power structure more. Believing their very existence is threatened, they have no regard for laws, rules or those they claim to represent. It's win at all costs for them.

In summation, if you are a true conservative, one that values traditional American values and the freedoms generations of Americans have sacrificed their lives for, the majority of the current MTGOP sees you as a threat. The MTGOP has become what they started out fighting against; a power center that only desires more power. Their choices and actions certainly are not those of a morally centered organization. In short, the current MTGOP is simply the Republican wing of the Uni-Party. One bird, two wings. Morals have no place in their decision process. The majority of the current MTGOP leadership MUST be replaced!

As our Founders warned us throughout the Federalist Papers; "Government is the natural enemy of Freedom." Their only source of power is to take yours! The MTGOP clearly demonstrates they see themselves as rulers in state government. These people, who were elected to be humble servants, have succumbed to the temptation of power and no longer serve the interest of the people. They are wholly self-serving. None are more deceived than the self-deceived.