

Statement from Rules Committee Chair and Vice Chair Concerning Proposed Changes to KS GOP State and Executive Committees

05/30/2023

Explanation for Proposals

The unfortunate actions of those opposed to allowing elected delegates decide this issue are described below the explanation for the proposals.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment #1 – Resolve Conflict Concerning State Committee Membership:

On a vote of 8 to 3, nearly a three-fourths supermajority of rules committee members agreed there was a conflict in the Republican Party Constitution (Constitution) concerning the state committee membership. They proposed to fix the conflict by limiting committee membership to only those duly elected to the state committee per the process defined in the Constitution.

The Constitution outlines a detailed process by which members of the KS GOP become members of the state committee. The process provides for 37 members from each of the four congressional districts, a total of 148 members, to be elected to the state committee. The 37 members from each of the congressional districts begin their path to becoming a state committee member by first earning the respect of their peers at the district level. Then they are elected to the state committee representing their respective districts. This process also aligns with our representative republic form of government. These individuals represent the people of the districts from which they came.

There is no process provided for in the Constitution for the other members of the state committee to be elected to the state committee. The other members of the committee include the affiliate organizations (special interest groups), members of state legislative leadership, the governor, members of the U.S. legislature and elected state officials. These individuals were NOT duly elected to serve on the state committee via the process outlined in the Constitution and therefore do not represent any of the individuals in the four congressional districts. These committee members seem to serve as some type of super delegates, numbering 17 in size and have the potential of diluting the vote of the duly elected members of the four congressional districts.

Representatives of the affiliate organizations represent statewide special interest groups, and in some instances, a national group. Legislators and elected state officials work for the people, not the other way around and should not be in a position where they could unduly influence the actions of the KS GOP. According to Article II of the Kansas Republican Party Constitution, “The Kansas Republican Party is dedicated to the advancement of Republican candidates, policies and principles and shall aid in every way possible the Republican nominees selected in each partisan primary.” This process could be influenced by U.S. Congressman and elected state officials.

Additionally, the RNC doesn’t include affiliate groups or legislators as part of the Republican National Committee and 10 of the 12 state Republican parties in the RNC Midwestern Region do not have any affiliate groups on their state committees. The RNC and 83% of the Midwestern Region state committees align with a representative republic form of government. The current KS GOP State Committee has 181 members and is larger than the Republican National Committee, which includes 56 states and U.S. territories.

Proposed Bylaws Amendment #1 – Resolve Conflict Concerning Executive Committee Membership:

On a vote of 8 to 3, nearly a three-fourths supermajority of rules committee members agreed the Kansas GOP Executive Committee membership should be limited to those duly elected to the state committee per the process defined in the Republican Party Constitution (Constitution), as well as one at large member from each congressional district, duly elected, to serve on the executive committee per the process outlined in the Republican Party Bylaws (Bylaws).

Currently, the executive committee includes both elected and unelected members. The four congressional district chairs, vice chairs and at-large members represent the people of the districts from which they came. This process aligns with the Constitution, Bylaws and our representative republic form of government.

There is no process provided for in the Constitution for the other members of the executive committee to be elected. The unelected members of the committee include two members appointed by the KS GOP Chair, affiliate organizations (special interest groups), members of state legislative leadership, the governor, members of the U.S. legislature and elected state officials. These individuals were NOT duly elected to serve via the process outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws, and therefore do not represent any of the individuals from the four congressional districts.

The two appointments by the KS GOP Chair allow for concentration of power. Representatives of the affiliate organizations represent statewide special interest groups, and in some instances, a national group. Legislators and elected state officials work for the people, not the other way around, and should not be in a position where they could unduly influence the actions of the KS GOP. According to Article II of the Kansas Republican Party Constitution, “The Kansas Republican Party is dedicated to the advancement of Republican candidates, policies and principles and shall aid in every way possible the Republican nominees selected in each partisan primary.” This process could be influenced by U.S. Congressman and elected state officials.

Lastly, the RNC doesn’t include affiliate groups or legislators as part of the Republican National Committee Executive Committee and 9 of the 12 state Republican parties in the RNC Midwestern Region do not have any affiliate groups on their executive committees. The RNC and 75% of the Midwestern Region Executive Committees align with a representative republic form of government. The current KS GOP Executive Committee has 41 members and is larger than the Republican National Executive Committee, which includes 56 states and U.S. territories. This is an extremely large committee size and makes it difficult to conduct business. Subcommittees are intentionally paired down in size so that business can be conducted in an efficient manner. The RNC Executive Committee and Midwestern Region States Executive Committees are smaller for this very reason.

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The Kansas GOP RNC Committeewoman and Committeeman, the four congressional district chairs and several affiliate groups launched a coordinated media campaign to stop members of the Kansas GOP State Committee from exercising their right to vote on two rules committee proposals in accordance with the Kansas Republican Party Constitution and Bylaws. The two rules committee proposals under consideration deal with the state and executive committees.

After the initial discussion on these proposals at the April 27th rules committee meeting, Kansas GOP Committeewoman, Kim Borchers and Committeeman, Mark Kahrs, contacted two rules committee members they believed could be influenced to vote against the proposed rules changes. Borchers was relentless in her attempts to influence the vote, and in one case, calling one committee member five times in one day. She belittled the committee member at least twice, just in the questioning of the committee member's qualifications to be on the committee. Failing to bully the committee member into voting no, Borchers attempted to evoke fear in the committee member by telling them the optics would look bad by not having the minority groups involved. She then threatened to leak the information to the press, telling the committee member, "When the papers get the information, if the vote is to accept, the perception published will be bad for the party and state."

At the May 9th, 7:00 p.m. rules committee meeting, with a quorum present, 73% of the committee members voted to send both proposals to the state committee to be debated and voted on as required by the Republican Party Constitution and Bylaws. Within minutes of approving the first proposal, the results of the vote were leaked out of committee and appeared on Facebook. By the next morning, the rules committee documents were leaked to the Sunflower State Journal and Kansas City Star with rules committee member, Kelly Arnold, contributing to the creation of several false narratives the media has used to malign the KS GOP. Things happened just like Kim Borchers said they would if the rules committee approved the proposals. The papers received the information and the optics were bad.

After initial release of the rules committee working documents to the press, several coordinated, timed-released statements followed with the goal to keep 181 members of the KS GOP State Committee from voting on the proposals under consideration. Following a joint statement against the proposals by the four congressional district chairs, first district chair Laura Francis and second district chair Eric Rucker contacted rules committee members to influence their vote. Rucker asked a member of the rules committee if they would like to step down, which would allow the member to be replaced with someone who would vote to rescind the proposals. District chairs made the joint statement using their official titles, which means they should have received approval from their district committee members. This did not happen.

The statement from RNC Committeewoman and Committeeman is extremely concerning because it displays the chicanery at work in our party. In the statement, our RNC Committeewoman and Committeeman state, "The media has had a field day falsely (**as we warned**) attacking the proposal as anti-woman and anti-minority." Implying the media came by these proposals by happenstance is unconscionable. Committeewoman, Kim Borchers made it clear to the rules committee member she tried to bully into voting no on the proposals that, "When the papers get the information, if the vote is to accept, the perception published will be bad for the party and state."

Using the media to get your way is not only foolish, but it is also dangerous. No good can ever come from inviting the media into the middle of a family disagreement. This intentional use of the media to create false narratives in order to keep state committee members from exercising their right to vote shows a total lack of regard for the rules and the well-being of the KS GOP (Party). These sinister tactics have resulted in irreparable damage to the reputation of the Party, the KS GOP Chair, and rules committee members, not to mention handicapping the ability of the Kansas Republican Party to operate.

The negative attention the KS GOP is now experiencing is not the result of a couple of rules committee proposals. It is the result of a small faction within the KS GOP who have made a conscious choice to not follow the rules in place and, by any means necessary, ensure their will supersedes that of the duly elected members of the state committee by suppressing their vote. The Kansas Republican Party Bylaws are clear that the rules committee, made up of representatives from each congressional district, is responsible for recommending changes to the constitution and bylaws and the state committee is responsible for making the final decision on the proposed rules. To be clear, these proposed changes cannot be made by one rules committee member, nor the affiliate groups, nor the congressional district chairs, nor the RNC Committeewoman and Committeeman, and certainly not the media.

The small faction within the KS GOP that launched the media campaign say they want to unify the party. Intentionally using the media to spread false narratives to beat fellow Republicans into submission is not characteristic of someone who truly wants unity. Launching a coordinated campaign to stop the proposals by deception in order to suppress the vote of the 181 state committee members will not build unity. The Platform states that, "voting is an essential individual right." As Republicans, we do not suppress the vote. The rules committee proposals ensure that everyone has the same opportunity to participate through the election process.

Hijacking the rules process before the proposals were ever approved and submitted to the state chair for distribution to ALL KS GOP members and claiming there is a lack of transparency will not build unity.

For a member of the Kansas Black Republican Council to claim these proposals, "...eliminate Black leadership representation from the Kansas GOP..." when they know it isn't true, will not build unity. Minorities currently are and will continue to be members of the state, executive and standing committees. For those who have implied the proposals are "anti-women," when they know they are not, will not build unity. Women are and will continue to be members of the state, executive and standing committees. In fact, there are and will continue to be three women state officers regardless of the outcome of these proposals.

The Kansas GOP is a family and all families will disagree from time to time. If unity is truly what we all desire, then going forward, the following things must happen: deal with each other honestly, follow our Kansas Republican Party Constitution and Bylaws (Rules), and follow the Platform. Lastly, as our Platform states, we must, "...renew our commitment to Almighty God, as we continue to focus on each individual's unique value, dignity, and duty to serve our State, Nation and fellow man." To that end, we call on all members of the KS GOP to: 1) review the two rule's proposals attached to this statement and debate them openly and honestly, 2) follow the Rules and Platform regardless of your opinions or feelings, and 3) support the KS GOP with your time, talents and money.

Bryant Anderson, CD1
Rules Chair

Mark Mowrey, CD3
Rules Vice Chair

Note: Unelected members of the state and executive committees is not a new issue. It has been a topic of discussion for many years. When we came together as a rules committee, several of us had this change as our highest priority and we had not spoken to one another prior to the formation of the rules committee. This is just the first time in years that the will of the elected delegates has been allowed to be heard on the rules committee and then passed through to allow a vote on this issue.