

13 April, 2016

Many Colorado Republicans are upset following the State Republican Convention, mainly due to the caucus/Assembly system that's in place to select delegates that will ultimately represent us all at the Republican National Convention. The frustration stems from the fact that a majority of registered Republicans are / were unaware of the entire process. We as voters do not, nor do we have the ability in Colorado to, select our preferred candidate through a vote of the people.

What caused this sudden disturbance in the force? In 2012 everyone who attended a precinct caucus was given the opportunity to cast a vote for their preferred Presidential candidate, and Rick Santorum won that straw poll handily. However, the results of that straw poll did not bind CO delegates to Mr. Santorum, in fact Mitt Romney was the clear winner, based on delegate selection, at the State Convention that year. These delegates were selected through a process similar to what we just concluded in Colorado Springs.

In 2016 we followed the same rules, sans the straw poll, and from what I experienced the rules were followed.

In my opinion the current system is flawed.

1. At precinct caucuses we as registered Republicans vote for people (delegates), that we may or not know personally, to represent us at County Assemblies, Congressional District Assemblies, and the State Convention (higher Assemblies). At the caucus we might get to discuss one's beliefs, values, etc. for mere minutes before casting votes for those who have volunteered to represent us at any of the higher assemblies.
2. These delegates then participate in Congressional District Assemblies and the State Convention where they have an opportunity to hear from a plethora of candidates for a limited number of National Delegate positions. It's been my experience that as a voting delegate at these higher assemblies one is only able to hear at most 10 to 20 second sound bites from each national delegate candidate regarding who they are, which Presidential candidate they support, and why they should be selected to represent the electorate at the National Convention. In most cases the national delegate candidates that are well known (a.k.a Party "Wonks") are the ones that receive the majority of votes.

I chose to participate in the process this year, as I have in the past, only this year I made the choice to run for one of three national delegate spots representing Congressional District (CD) #4 at the National Convention. I received no monies or assistance from any Presidential candidate or campaign to promote my candidacy for National Delegate. A few days prior to the CD #4 Assembly I sent approximately 900 emails to delegates from a 22 County area explaining who I was, what I stand for, etc. Then at the Assembly, along with approximately 76 other national delegate candidates, I was given 10 seconds to rattle off my qualifications, etc., as to why I should receive the CD delegates' votes to represent them at the National Convention. The result of this process was that I was elected as an Alternate Delegate, which in my opinion was a significant accomplishment.

What the 2016 Republican Presidential candidate selection process has done is to:

1. Alert Colorado Republicans that they don't have an opportunity to cast their vote for their preferred Presidential candidate, and
2. Make a large percentage of us want to change the Party's rules so that we as voters have the ability to cast our vote for our preferred candidate, and have those votes count for something. 1 person = 1 vote!

Our form of government is that of a Constitutional Republic, based on Democratic principles. Our selection process for candidates to represent us in positions of delegated authority at the Federal level should not be a representative process where all is delegated to a minor subset of the electorate.

We need to adopt and implement a Presidential Primary for registered Republicans in Colorado, that would take place early enough in the "political seasons", so that our votes and our support of individual candidates make a difference. If such a system was instituted I believe that we would have Presidential candidates visit us here in "fly-over country" and seek out our votes, rather than just spend their time in states where primaries and valid caucus processes are held.

Let's have that discussion and if the majority choose to implement a Presidential Primary, lets do it well in advance of the 2020 election season!

For the record I am a retired United States Marine Corps Officer and a former Elbert County Commissioner supporting Mr. Donald Trump in his run for the office of President of the United States.

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