

Electing Candidates at Convention

A Proposed Bylaw Amendment

Lyle Decker Dec. 3, 2009

We all know that we have primary elections when candidates for public office do not get at least 60% of the vote at convention. **Primaries are very costly.** They cost candidates a **lot of money** at a time when money is hard to come by. (Most sources of money will not back a candidate until they have been elected as the Party's candidate, and by our rules the Party cannot help or support them until they are finally elected the Party candidate.) They are very **time consuming** when candidates ought to be influencing voters to elect them in a general election. Instead they have to **spend their time opposing another Republican.** They **cost elections** for the reasons mentioned and because it divides Republican voters. It is **entirely unnecessary.**

In addition to these costs, every resident of the county pays a price. It **costs millions of dollars** to run a primary. Put another way, when the delegates can't make up their mind at a Republican convention all of the residents of the county are asked to **pay millions of dollars in taxes to help us choose our own candidate.** This comes at a cost to us, though. A significant number of people who vote in Republican primaries are non-Republicans who are allowed to register as Republicans long enough to vote. As an election judge I watched as my non-Republican neighbors registered as Republicans and voted – **including the family of the Democrat who was also running.** **How nice of the Democrats to help us choose our candidates.**

The **Democrats do not have primaries.** They make that choice themselves. Years ago they found that as a minority party **they could not afford the cost** of primaries. They put all their **effort and resources into general elections,** gaining months of campaigning **while Republicans fight each other** and deplete each other's resources. **They are no longer the minority party.** Can we still afford primaries?

I have been a strong supporter of high election thresholds at convention for 30 years. My views have changed. I believe **the time has come for us to elect our own candidates at convention** and quit having primaries. This will strengthen the Party and our candidates in many ways and help win elections. This is my only intent in the amendment I am proposing.

If most of the delegates would stay at conventions through 3 or 4 – or more – ballots I would propose simply changing the wording in Article IX to read "the Party's candidates shall be elected at convention". However, if we do only that, **candidates would still have to be elected by a 60% threshold, and delegates would have to stay until they were able to reach that number.** I have been attending conventions for more than 30 years now, and I know that delegates get anxious to go home. Few are interested in having the convention be hours longer.

So to facilitate electing candidates at convention I am also **proposing to change the threshold to the same level that is already required of all other single seat elections** – a majority of legal votes cast.

I have talked about this proposal with elected officials. At first, most of them have said, this will really help incumbents. I have pointed out that it **will actually make it easier for challengers** to be elected who work hard and organize well. In spite of that, **all the elected officials I spoke with agreed with the proposal.** They personally understand the great costs of primaries.

At the 2008 Nominating Convention an unusual thing happened. **All the candidates were elected at convention. There were no primary elections for county offices.** Somehow we all survived. We can do that every time. We should. Republicans should elect Republican candidates so **we decide who our candidates will be** and so we can avoid the huge costs of primaries. [How often can your vote at a Central Committee meeting save millions of dollars?]

This is a simple wording change, but a significant change in how we do our business. I believe it is a good change with lasting benefits for the Party and its candidates. I am aware this is not a small decision. I want you to think it through well. I believe it has many significant benefits for us and will strengthen the Party. I am asking for your support of this amendment

Amending the Bylaws to elect Party candidates at convention by majority vote will:

- * save money and candidate resources
 - * make campaign funding and Party assistance available months sooner
 - * save candidate's time so they can devote full time to winning general elections
 - * allow Republicans to focus on winning elections rather than fighting each other
 - * prevent Republicans from damaging each other's reputations in primaries
 - * save all county residents millions of tax dollars
 - * insure that Republicans choose their own candidates without outside "help"
 - * make us more competitive with the Democrats (who do not have primaries)
 - * "level the playing field" for candidates challenging incumbents
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Art. IX, Sec. 2, B, 1 & 3 (Election Standards)

B. Elections

1. Single-seat offices: **Party candidates for public office.** Party officers, senate district chairs, voting precinct officers and any other single seat positions within the Party or its committees shall be elected by majority using a single or multiple round election method.
3. ~~Party candidates for public office: at convention the Party candidates for public office shall be elected the Party's candidate by a 60% threshold vote using the multiple round election method. If no single candidate receives the 60% threshold vote, the top two (2) candidates shall participate in a primary.~~

Art. IX, Sec. 3, A & B (Voting Methods)

- A. Single round elections: Voters cast a single ballot with one name per seat selected on the ballot. If a candidate receives a majority, ~~or in the case of candidates for public office at convention a 60% threshold vote, the election is decided that candidate becomes the Party's candidate.~~ If not, the election goes into multiple rounds **becomes a multiple round election.**
- B. Multiple round elections: The first ballot shall be used to reduce the number of candidates to those receiving the highest percentage of votes that, when combined, represent a majority of votes. This process continues in each successive round until one(1) candidate receives a majority **and becomes the Party's candidate,** ~~or in the case of public office, the balloting shall continue to a final round with the top two (2) candidates. If one (1) candidate for public office receives the 60% threshold, that candidate becomes the Party nominee, but if neither candidate receives the 60% threshold, those two (2) candidates are to be referred to a primary election.~~