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Scott County Republicans have every reason to hang their heads in shame after the sham of a county convention that broke its own rules to deliberately exclude at least 30 percent of the duly elected precinct delegates from being nominated as delegates to the district, state, and national conventions. At a minimum, members should be demanding that Scott County GOP Central Committee Chair Judy Davidson resign. Davidson was *not* elected convention chair at the March 10 meeting, yet she disallowed nominations for district and state delegates, then railroaded through her own predetermined slate of names to be delegates – without a motion from the delegation – and then conducted a secret ballot to conclude the charade. There were dozens of delegates present who were elected in their precincts and, by the party's own rules, should have been included first on any list or slate of delegates moving forward.

As ugly as American politics has become, electing delegates is representative governance at the very grassroots level. At the much ballyhooed January 3 caucuses, the only binding elections that occurred were those of the GOP central-committee members (two per precinct) and the county delegates (various numbers per precinct depending on population). Despite what the media wants you to believe, the January 3 presidential-preference poll was just that – a straw poll, nothing more than a beauty contest – and the results are not binding for delegates. Those who showed up in their precinct and were elected by their neighbors as delegates earned the privilege of moving forward to the next conventions to represent their precincts as they see fit.

In other words, if the "handwriting is on the wall" about any candidate, as the media and the GOP want you to believe, then at a minimum, that candidate's supporters should have been present at the January 3 precinct caucuses to do the handwriting. The bottom line is that Ron Paul supporters showed up in droves, resulting in more than 35 percent of the delegates elected on January 3 who lean toward Dr. Paul's constitutional message of sound money and international peace. These messages are ones that Scott County GOP leaders do not want to see proliferate, so they broke their own rules to quash potential Ron Paul supporters from participating in the April 21 district convention and the June 16 state convention. The fear factor here is that if Ron Paul supporters make it to the conventions, then Ron Paul delegates may make it to the national convention and successfully work to nominate Ron Paul.

What's worse is that party leaders worked hard to find people to be county delegates and eventual district/state delegates who were not present or elected at the January 3 precinct caucuses. Judy Davidson herself did not even participate at her own precinct caucus. As long as you pay your $15 and do what you are told, you are good to go on the super-secret slate. This begs the question: Why even have a precinct-caucus election of delegates if the delegates moving forward are just going to be handpicked by the central committee behind closed doors?

For that matter, why even have a county convention if the delegates themselves cannot nominate anyone moving forward as the rules dictate?

Many of the delegates, myself included, determined that what transpired on March 10 was fraudulent and unacceptable. We set out out to reconvene the county convention as the party rules allow and state statute (Iowa Code, Title 2; 43.85) actually dictates to correct the violations that occurred on March 10 and elect a lawful slate of district/state delegates. The names and addresses of the delegates are filed with the county auditor and are a public document. A postcard was mailed out to the delegates announcing a reconvening, which is completely lawful and proper *if* the delegates can assemble a quorum – which in this case was 93 delegates. Unfortunately, only 71 delegates assembled on Thursday, March 22, and thus a quorum was not met, and no delegation business was conducted.

More evidence causing shame to every Scott County Republican is how the central-committee leadership and Judy Davidson conducted themselves once the call for reconvening the convention went out. Obviously the mandate from Davidson's superiors up the GOP ladder demanded that she stop the delegates from achieving a quorum on March 22. Daily messages barraged the delegates from Davidson, including e-mails, postcards, letters, and robo-calls. Party leaders were able to co-opt two local TV stations into smearing the effort to gain a quorum by labeling the postcard "fake," "false," and "bogus" – without actually investigating the issue: how the process worked, or why reconvening was legitimate and necessary.

The pressure must have been massive on Davidson to maintain what former Iowa GOP Chair Matt Strawn called Scott County: the "jewel" in the Iowa GOP crown of counties. If the Scott County delegation actually assembled with a quorum and reconvened, then the county party leaders' corruption and lack of ethics would be documented and established by a lawful quorum of the delegation, tarnishing the "jewel" of the Iowa GOP.

The irony of all this is that if the party leadership had conducted themselves honorably and within their own rules, they would have likely carried the day. Davidson had a majority of support for the rubber-stamping of her secret slate, but she refused to recognize a motion from the floor because that would open up the delegation to debate. And heaven forbid that a room full of adults would be encouraged to debate any issues.

I can hear the back room pep-talk now: "You cannot allow those people to be self-determinant! They do what we tell them to do, and if they don't, we cheat to ensure they have no voice or

influence on others! Now get out there and preach 'Unity, unity, unity!'"

The pressure was so great that it went all the way to the new Republican Party of Iowa chair, A.J. Spiker – who is an avowed former Ron Paul supporter from Story County. He penned a letter stating that the state party selects the date of the county convention for the entire state, and that the state party would not be reconvening the Scott County delegation.

Technically, Spiker is accurate on both counts, and party leaders successfully gambled on the delegation not considering what Spiker did not include in his letter: that, after the state party set the March 10 county-convention date and the delegation met and adjourned, the delegation can agree to meet again if they so choose. What if March 10 had no quorum? What if March 10 went too long into the night and had to reconvene for unfinished business? What Spiker also did not include was that the authority over the results of the county convention rests with the lawful assembly (read: quorum) of the delegates elected at the January 3 caucus, and no one else. If the state GOP had denied these delegates their due process by refusing to recognize a properly elected slate of delegates upon reconvening with a quorum, the delegates were prepared to take it to court.

What is sad is that Spiker participated in the cover-up of Davidson's transgressions and failed to substantively address any of the disenfranchised delegates' documented concerns about the March 10 proceedings. One can only imagine the pressure Spiker was under, in his new role at the helm of a political machine that has proven it will cheat if the ends justify the means. It's revealing to consider why, if reconvening the county convention was so invalid, county and state party leaders worked so hard and expended so many resources convincing the delegates to not attend.

It might be of interest to some that Davidson purportedly has her hat in the ring for a seat on the Republican National Committee, and perhaps her actions were far more "ambitious" than anyone knows. And Davidson, who *did not attend* her own caucus on January 3, has been appointed to a 17-member statewide committee to evaluate what went wrong on caucus night? You can't make this up. Regardless, corruption at the local county-party level is so beyond redeemable. What possible change can we expect at the state and federal level when those in our own county can't be trusted to conduct a fair and transparent process?

The meme one will hear from Republicans now is "Focus on what's important: defeating Obama in November." Never mind the corruption and the outright theft of your elected voice, in the

service of “unity.” Republicans are expected to just blindly go with whatever candidate the establishment coughs up and do their duty as good servants. Never mind that Mitt Romney’s number-one financial backer is also Obama’s number-one financial backer: Goldman Sachs. Never mind that the “struggle” we are in is a charade of the highest order, keeping us distracted from what is happening in our own backyards, with our own county commissions, and in our own state legislatures.