

MORTON C. BLACKWELL

Dear Fellow Delegate,

On Tuesday of this week, as Republican National Convention delegates, you and I will be voting on rules changes that could fundamentally change our Republican Party -- and not for the better.

Over the years, I've served on the Louisiana and Virginia GOP Rules Committees. I currently serve on both the Republican National Committee's Standing Committee on Rules and on the National Convention's Committee on Rules and Order of Business.

I was Barry Goldwater's youngest elected delegate in 1964, I was honored to serve on President Ronald Reagan's White House Staff from 1981-1984, and I have attended every Republican National Convention Rules Committee meeting since 1972. My wife and I have contributed major donations to the Romney-Ryan campaign.

These rule changes are the most awful I've ever seen come before any National Convention. I'm writing you today to urge you to join the growing effort to stop the worst-ever changes in this Rules Committee's Report and to vote in favor of amendments to Rules 12 and 15. The Minority Reports will restore important rights and protections which state parties and grassroots Republicans would lose under the Rules Committee Report as written.

These amendments to Rules 12 and 15 are contained in Minority Reports supported by at least 25% of the members of this convention's Committee on Rules and Order of Business.

It's rare for Minority Reports to come before our national convention, but the issues involved here are vital to the future of our party.

I must tell you there is tremendous arm-twisting now to peel signers off of the Minority Reports. Finally, whether on Minority Reports or on voting down the Rules, it will require at least six states' delegations to insist upon a roll call vote.

I will not pretend that the deck is not stacked against us.

But many state leaders, liberty-minded activists, and grass-roots conservatives are up-in-arms as word of this power grab spreads.

Our convention will make this important decision Tuesday as some of our first work. Many folks skip these procedural sessions thinking nothing of importance occurs.

This year, that is far from the truth.

If the Rules Committee Report were to pass without adoption of the Minority Reports, it would amount to a power grab by Washington, D.C. party insiders and consultants designed to silence the voice of state party activists and Republican grassroots by:

*** Handing national party officials the power to change national party rules adopted by state and grassroots leaders at the Republican National Convention. For generations, the prohibition of manipulated changes in the national Rules of the Republican Party between national conventions has served as one of the crown jewels of our party. It's a power grab which opens the door to many future

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power grabs.

*** Stripping state parties in all states with binding primaries of the power of choosing who will represent their states as national delegates and alternate delegates.

This outrageous change would empower presidential campaigns to disapprove and remove delegates and alternate delegates selected by rules adopted by state Republican parties. Rather than grassroots activists who won delegate and alternate delegate slots by following state party rules, a large majority of positions would be handed to top donors of the winning campaign.

*** Gutting the great and successful reform adopted in the current election cycle to stop the dangerous trend to front-load the selection of national convention delegates. Our party would move again toward a national primary which would deny grassroots Republicans the opportunity to vet presidential candidates in a nomination contest of reasonable length. This reform must not be abandoned. Like most of us delegates to this convention, I've spent years gladly battling in the trenches for our Republican Party.

And as the President of the Leadership Institute -- which specializes in training thousands of conservative activists, students, and leaders to fight for our country's future -- I can't tell you how disheartened I am to see these rules changes even considered.

These rule changes would give good folks like you less of a say over our Republican Party in favor of insiders and consultants in Washington, D.C.

At a time when Tea Party activists have re-invigorated our Republican Party -- leading to massive gains in the U.S. House, the Senate, and many state legislatures in the 2010 elections -- why would we want to discourage activism?

Thanks to their efforts, you and I have a new generation of exciting conservative leaders in Washington, D.C., who -- in many instances -- were elected despite the opposition of establishment-backed opponents.

Certainly this is not to say GOP leaders are always wrong.

But history shows that our Republican Party grows when we welcome newly active participants and treat them fairly.

Our Republican Party is strongest when we listen to the wishes of grassroots conservatives.

Instead of strengthening our party, these insider power grabs will weaken it.

For these reasons, I urge you to join the growing effort to adopt the Minority Reports when the Rules Committee Report comes up for consideration by the convention.

Cordially,



Morton Blackwell

National Committeeman, Virginia