



July 20, 2020

On the 2020 Republican Party of Texas Proposed Platform

Until last weekend, conservatives throughout our state could take pride in the notion that the Republican Party of Texas (RPT) was a bottom-to-top, wholly grassroots organization. We believe it is important for individuals from across Texas to have a voice in the governance of their party. This is precisely why some of our party's leaders fought passionately to hold an in-person convention during these trying times.

It is also a reason why many of us became involved in the first place. As Texas Republicans, we can track the progress of our efforts and observe as support for little-known issues swells at our biennial state convention.

Sometimes things don't go our way. Sure, there are occasional disputes and instances where we may fall short of our goals, but there is typically an overarching feeling of confidence in the process – especially with regard to the development of our party's platform.

Today, regrettably, I cannot confirm that the same confidence has extended beyond this convention.

With the impromptu decision to proceed with a virtual convention, many of us expected a certain amount of technical and administrative hurdles. The idea of an online convention is completely at odds with how the RPT conducts business. Procedures needed to be amended, legal problems addressed, training videos produced, and decades of precedent had to be upended. Delegates expected challenges, absolutely, but they did not expect to be disenfranchised and ignored – especially by their party's Platform Committee.

The Platform Committee Chairman sought to limit or prevent debate at every opportunity. During the temporary committee meetings, others along with myself were called to testify on certain issues only after action on those issues had already been taken by the committee. Furthermore, many observed that additional speaking time was haphazardly allotted and denied – with Young Republicans never seeming to benefit from the Chairman's discretion.

The Platform Committee Chairman also refused to enforce RPT Rule 8L on a committee member which would have prevented this individual from voting on issues on which he held a financial interest. This member was permitted to vote and rail against Texas Young Republican priorities despite having very clear, public conflicts of interest.

This same committee member was also allowed to propagate unsubstantiated and absurd accusations about the Texas Young Republican Federation, the largest auxiliary of the RPT, during meetings – slanting perceptions of our organization's intentions to his colleagues on the Platform Committee. The peddling of paltry conspiracy theories is out of line and completely unbecoming of individuals who play such an incredibly vital role in defining our party.

The above-mentioned acts of limiting and swaying debate, while obviously shady, are not explicitly in violation of RPT rules, the unconscionable actions that occurred at yesterday's meeting of the Permanent Platform Committee were clearly a violation.



Yesterday morning, the only meeting of the Permanent Platform Committee was called to order with no notice to delegates and conducted official business without either public accessibility (livestream) or opportunities for testimony - a direct violation of RPT Rule 14. After a long delay, a livestream was eventually initiated. When a subsequent point of order was raised regarding this rule as it related to the business done before the start of the livestream, the chairman dismissed concerns and held that the prior business was in order.

As this meeting progressed, it became clear that concerns about transparency were not the only things that would be dismissed. Original amendments submitted by delegates in accordance with Rule 4 of the Supplemental Rules for the 2020 State Convention were also not considered by this committee.

As a result of this undeniable rebuke of our membership and the RPT grassroots by the Platform Committee Chairman and some of his fellow members, I contend that the document they crafted is completely illegitimate and must be soundly rejected by our party.

This year's proposed platform should not be interpreted to represent any kind of policy directive from Texas Republicans. We, as grassroots conservatives, should have no confidence that this document represents us because our input was not sought.

This document doesn't represent us - and it doesn't represent Texas.

In 2022, we should consider starting from scratch.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James C. Rains". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J".

James C. Rains
Vice Chairman
Texas Young Republicans