

2014

Responsible Reform in Governance

for the Republican Party of Florida

"[Our] object is to secure self-government by the republicanism of our constitution, as well as by the spirit of the people; and to nourish and perpetuate that spirit. I am not among those who fear the people. They and not the rich are our dependence for continued freedom." --Thomas Jefferson



Eric D. Miller
Candidate for Chairman of the RPOF
12/19/2014



INTRODUCTION

While the RPOF Chairman does not pass legislation, it is important that we understand the thinking of the person we ask to lead our party. Their beliefs on party governance will have a profound, long-lasting influence on decisions vital to us all.

The purpose of this paper is to provide the reader a greater insight into how I will conduct my administration and its activities. I encourage all candidates for party office to outline their ideas on party governance.

WHY WE NEED RESPONSIBLE REFORM

CAPITULATION

Over the past decade our party has become less about rank-and-file politics and more about mechanical operations and the consolidation of power. We have ceded our voices and our brand to a few who use the party for self-interest and gain. We have surrendered our clout and allowed our county REC's and State party to become mere appendages to political campaigns run by politicians chosen in secret behind closed doors in high-rise office buildings.

Party leaders are instructed to avoid taking stands on issues and positions on policy and governance lest they create a negative impact on our brand. Some of our political office holders are forcing the state party to undergo a redefinition of who should or should not have their voices heard. When we address issues like Common Core education standards, traditionally the purview of each local citizenry, we are told *"to sit down and shut up."* We are instructed to elect certain Republicans regardless of their ideologies. And we are told with a wink and a nod to give lip service to our grassroots so that the consolidation of power at the top can continue unabated.

When asked during the recent Chairman's debate whether the RPOF should take a position on issues antithetical to the platform, one candidate for Chairman replied, *"if we are vocally going to disagree, think what the opposition is going to do to you. What are the Democrats going to do when we are opposing some of this stuff?"* Their point that we should talk behind closed doors and never in public is but one example of the way the voices of our rank-and-file are suppressed. It is one of several mistakes that create an image that the Republican brand is not really OUR brand but is owned and directed exclusively by our public servants, and not the people who elect them.

Should we accept and maintain the policy position of the latest politician de jour even when it is antithetical to our principles, only because the opposition party may remark upon it? That is not leadership, it is capitulation. We need a leader that will stand with our committee against policy that is anti-American, anti-Republican and anti-free markets. I have done so consistently, irrespective of personal cost, and as your Chairman I'll make sure your voice is heard. We must take a stand together when bad policy can have a negative effect on our brand.

LOCAL SUPPORT

Our party structure was designed to appeal to the public and incorporate willing participants at the local level, for the purpose of recruiting, training and electing outstanding Republican candidates for local and state offices.

We are meant to be strongest at our base, not at the pinnacle. The structure of our organization has become top-heavy, causing a malaise to creep into our processes. We ignore what we, as Republicans, believe is most important to governance - local control .

Our county REC's have serious challenges recruiting members. It is thought that some of our counties currently suffer a vacancy rate of 40% or more. Persons willing to take the lead are often hesitant because our party has failed to maintain the vital mantle of inclusion. It no longer carries the reputation for diversity that's needed to encourage people to join in our fight. Many have forgotten how to build upon a brand and stay relevant.

But I've never forgotten. Several months ago I and members of my team proactively initiated contact with more than a dozen State and National conservative (grassroots) organizations and policy institutes in search of a route for future cooperation with our State Party. These conservative organizations can be broadly described as belonging to one of four groups. The first three are typically described as the Tea Party, Liberty Organizations and the Reagan Establishment. The fourth group consists of several well recognized and highly regarded conservative policy institutes. We must both strengthen existing relationships and build new ones to reconnect effectively with those on the ground.

I believe that we too often ignore many of the options available to us for growing the party. We must proactively reach out to all sectors of society to build a diverse and lasting majority. My administration will reinvigorate efforts to reach out to local clubs and organizations. They are often populated by members who first went the party route, but left due to frustration over the perception of poor governance. But bypassing the larger like-minded conservative organizations is counterproductive. I will in coordination with these state and national organizations seek new membership for our county REC's from among their registered local members.

As your next Chairman, I am 100% committed to employing all of the tools essential to bring an unprecedented level of growth to our party in as brief a time as possible. We will save Florida from the clutches of the Democrats in 2016, and beyond.

RPOF RULES

Some of our rules were designed to exclusively favor leadership factions and not the body as a whole. We have an urgent need for changes and clarification to our procedural bylaws and constitution.

Some examples include:

- Changing our fiscal cycle to accommodate the ratification of the new budget concurrent to a new Chairman's administration.
- We should have proviso for recalling any executive board member for malfeasance or dereliction of duty.
- There should be a rule to govern the hiring of senior staff positions so as not to encumber a new chairman and board with staff not of their choosing.
- We need to administratively redefine the extra State Committee seats appointed by the Governor, House and Senate leaders as non-voting ex officio members.
- We should develop a process to administratively call an emergency meeting of the Executive Board.
- We need to determine and codify that which constitutes an endorsement by the RPOF.

Obviously, there are more concerns that need to be identified. Under my administration, we will work to resolve deficiencies and achieve greater transparency and cooperation in party governance as a first order of business.

VOLUNTEERS, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

After each election cycle we pat the backs of our volunteers and donors and send them on their way. Then, a few months before the next election, we call upon these volunteers again, expecting them to become

excited about repeating their participation in a party that has all but ignored them. Maintaining a strong volunteer corps is crucial to Party dominance. We need an enticement that draws volunteers into our REC's and clubs.

We can and must dramatically improve our failing efforts at outreach. Identifying and institutionalizing an effective set of best practices and standards for outreach will be a major focus of my administration.

Our first step must be to find common ground, by identifying the concerns and promoting the beliefs and goals that conservative Floridians hold in common. We must supersede our political opposition, taking the steps necessary for our party to shine under scrutiny. A truly inclusive party is evidenced not by catchy slogans and clichés but through our attention to the issues that truly affect us all. The demagoguery of simple pandering to an ethnic or gender group has not benefitted our party or nation.

Let us demonstrate an unyielding support for those basic principles on which all Floridians agree, and build from there. Economic opportunity; free markets; transparent governance; respect for citizen rights. No one disagrees with these essential American morays. Repackaging tired platitudes and old gimmicks can only result in more failure. We must welcome a new, authentic message at the core of our GOTV. We must first stand for our neighbors, if we expect them to stand with us.

RESTORING PARTY HEALTH

Unity is defined in the dictionary as the quality or state of not being multiple: oneness. Our party has been fractionalized by a series of divisions purposefully crafted over a period of time for the partisan gain of a political wing. It has damaged our brand and chased off large numbers of former members. Over time party factions have strengthened, become more independent of each other, and today barely maintain a semblance of cohesion. This trend has become dangerous to the success of our party.

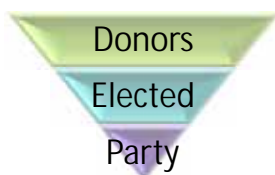
It can't be allowed to continue. Our state party has the responsibility to bring these factions together for reconciliation through a process of responsible reform. We will have the ability to reach a genuine unity once the foundation essential for party growth has been restored.

Political machinations in state government, sometimes accompanied by inappropriate legislation, have over the last decade consolidated power in the hands of a professional party wing. One of the building blocks used to implement their impenetrable control over the party was the weighted distribution of votes given to three (temporary) public servants. The Governor, Senate President and House Speaker together control a weighted 16% of the vote within our state party elections.

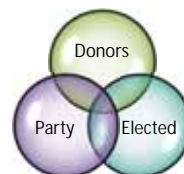
Our elected public servants should have a vote in party decisions equal to that of yours and mine. We can and should return to an equal distribution of votes for the long term health of the party. Members must believe they're participating in an open and transparent process of governance. While we can request the legislature revise the inappropriate statute, it is the opinion of legal counsel that this matter can be dealt with administratively. The earlier Hoffman Report similarly assesses our situation.

This single measure will be the harbinger in our process of reconciliation and of rebuilding our brand.

CURRENT EFFORTS LOOKS LIKE THIS:



A HEALTHY BALANCE LOOKS LIKE THIS:



DONORS AND ENDORSEMENTS

As part of our mission, we work at many levels to raise the funds needed to elect Republicans to office. Everyone throughout the party shares in this responsibility. Over the past decade a trend has developed where elected public servants use the party to raise funds and after depositing the funds with the party, demand the right to control for whom the funds are expended. They use the party as a tool, ultimately to benefit another public servant. Political wings typically drain funds from state parties.

This has caused unnecessary confusion over candidate endorsements by our State Party. Our Rules clearly specify a process for making endorsements and, in the absence of an endorsement, party funds are prohibited from being spent for the benefit of one Republican candidate over another in a contested Primary election. State statute instructs our party to report all funds that it expends on campaign activities. The act of allowing an elected public servant to direct funds from the Party during primaries, regardless their origin, is creating misunderstanding and even mistrust among voters.

Financial support of primary campaigns must be restricted to those candidates who have been formally endorsed by our party under the provisions of RPOF Rules. Our rules were deliberately written to make an endorsement the exception for that rare candidate who has proven him or herself singularly outstanding.

To arrive at an equitable solution to this problem I will initiate a discussion between the State Party and our state's Chief Executive and legislative leaders.

MY PROMISE TO YOU

- As Chairman of the Republican Party of Florida, I will conduct the governance of our venerable institution in strictest adherence to party rules and Republican philosophy.
- Committee Chairman will have a strong voice in the makeup of their Committee members.
- Reports and information for the Executive Board will be made available in a timely fashion prior to requesting consent for an agenda item.
- All Party members will be provided ample time to fully review proposed changes in budgets, rules and other party affairs, whenever approval is required by the Executive Board. Discussion will be encouraged, not suppressed.
- I will create a clear and unambiguous set of guidelines and definitions that eliminate confusion over what constitutes an endorsement by the party.
- Party expenditures will be reported with total transparency.
- New and unprecedented activities designed to increase membership in county REC's with double-digit growth rates.
- I will appoint a Parliamentarian to the State Committee and administer party activities under parliamentary rules.
- I will lead by example and eliminate practices that might shame or tarnish our party or its reputation.
- Party business will be conducted at all times in strict adherence to our Republican principles.
- Elected Republican officials will be encouraged to govern for and through their constituencies, at all times adhering to our shared Republican values.
- I will advance the cause of Republicanism, encourage fellow party members to add their voices to our ongoing discussions, and enforce a professional demeanor and responsive attitude among RPOF staff to better serve state and local leaders.
- I will devote a *full time effort* for the next two years to insure victory in 2016.

CONCLUSION

I and those within my administration will lead by example; with transparency, integrity and clear purpose, for the advancement of Republicanism. My administration will begin immediately to rebuild both party membership and the number of registered Republicans in Florida. We will work directly with county REC's first to restore and then surpass all previous membership records. We must prepare ourselves statewide for the 2016 elections. When we work together, we win.

Diversity + Grassroots = Growth

Thank you for taking your time to look over this brief document. I ask for your support and your vote for Chairman of the Republican Party of Florida. I encourage you to contact me with any ideas, thoughts or questions that may arise between now and election-day. Your input is invaluable and truly appreciated.

Remember... it's OUR party, and YOUR vote!

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EM', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Eric D. Miller
SCM Martin County
Candidate for RPOF Chairman