

John Owen Answers

by Henry C. Francis

I went to the Moore County Republican Party Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday, April 17, 2007 in the hope of offering an olive branch to John Owen. Before the meeting was called to order Mr. Owen spoke to me briefly and said that he had a letter from someone at the State Party level that says a person must be registered by January 1st prior to the precinct meeting in order to be eligible to become a delegate. I was surprised that he would choose to use this brief opportunity, our first conversation since the County Convention, to offer a letter as evidence he acted properly in our precinct meeting. I simply reminded him that the State and County Plans of Organization govern and they disagree with him. We did not have an opportunity to speak again. John did speak to me again but only to rule me out of order when I objected to his fresh trampling of our Plan of Organization during this meeting. ([See related article](#)).

John, send me the letter and I'll post it for all to see. I have not seen it yet but I promise that I will apologize to you and the good Republicans of Moore County and I will remove my postings regarding this controversy if your letter can authoritatively show why the text I have relied upon for my position should not be relied upon. It is very important that all Republicans work together; however, it is equally important that we follow the rules. John, if you will follow the rules I will follow you; however, when you do not follow the rules I will tell the good Republicans of Moore County what you have done and exactly what the rules say you should have done. If the rules are important enough to include in our Plan of Organization they are important enough to follow.

Here is what I have relied upon from the State Plan of Organization regarding eligibility of precinct members (County Plan is very similar):

ARTICLE II - PRECINCT ORGANIZATION

A. ANNUAL PRECINCT MEETINGS

1. Call for Meeting

In every year, the County Chairman shall call Precinct Meetings during the month of February or the first 15 days of March, after giving 10 days written notice to each Precinct Chairman and by notice in a newspaper of general circulation within the County as provided for in Article VII.A.4., and the Precinct Chairs also be informed as to the number of registered Republicans entitled to cast votes at the county convention, and in accordance with Article VII.A.4. Failure of the County Chairman to act in compliance with the provision above shall be cause for any Member of the County Executive Committee to call said Precinct Meetings by notice in a newspaper of general circulation within the County as provided for in Article VII, A.4. **Every Republican registered prior to January 31 preceding the Meetings shall be entitled to cast 1 vote, except that the January 31 requirement shall not apply to residents who have moved into the Precinct within 30 days of the Precinct Meeting.**

Here is the only text in the State Plan of Organization that mentions January 1st for any purpose (County Plan is very similar):

ARTICLE II - PRECINCT ORGANIZATION

A. ANNUAL PRECINCT MEETINGS

3. Election of Delegates

The annual Precinct Meetings shall elect 1 Delegate and 1 Alternate to the County Convention. **They shall also elect 1 additional Delegate and Alternate for each 100 registered Republican voters, or major fraction thereof, in the precinct as of January 1 of that year.**

In determining the number of registered Republicans to be used as the basis for the number of additional Delegates and Alternates to be elected in the precinct under this calculation, a County may adopt, in its Plan of Organization, a basis number of registered Republican voters less than 100 but, in so doing, must assure proportional representation of all registered Republican voters in the county.

No one can misunderstand which of these specify credentials of voting members (eligible to become a delegate) and which specify a basis for calculating the total number of delegates authorized for a precinct.

I am not concerned with “who is right” but rather “what is right”. What is right is to welcome the participation of precinct members who are registered prior to January 31st preceding the precinct meeting (or who have moved into the precinct within 30 days of the meeting). It is right because that is what the rule of our Plan is and without rules anything goes!

Henry C. Francis