

To Maine State GOP Secretary Chuck Mahaleris:

When I ran for my State Republican Party seat last May, I explained in my brief speech to the Penobscot County Caucus that it was for the express purpose of "restoring integrity and transparency to the Maine State GOP."

That fight has been monumental, but I honestly thought there was a way to do so.

That is, until the January 17 Penobscot County Committee meeting where we voted for not just Committee officers, but to ascertain the name of a judge to proffer to Governor Paul LePage to replace retiring Probate Judge Woodcock.

At that time, the Committee had fewer than 50 voting members, per our own bylaws. Yet there were 71 people voting in that election. That is undeniably an illegal election.

Three weeks before the elections, I personally called Maine State GOP Chair Rich Cebra to tell him that the bylaws had been illegally suspended and that the elections on January 17 were going to include voters who were not legally allowed to vote. His response was, "Please leave me out of this."

A week before the election, I called him again to beg him to stay at the meeting after his dinner and speech to ensure that the election would be legitimate. He told me he would not.

Mr. Cebra, in fact, finished his speech about "Party Unity" and quickly headed for the door before the election began, with apparently no idea of the irony of that action.

Our State Committeewoman resigned that night, after an illegal proxy was given to an unknown person by a Republican who was not a legal voting member. Five active members of the County Committee left the Committee after at least three legal voting members were not allowed to vote.

And one State Committeeman, Roger Ek, has said publicly as well as among the delegation that he has been involved in the County Republican Party, and he had never even seen at least half of the people voting that night.

Within days, a legitimate voting member of the Penobscot County Committee, Ken Anderson, filed an appeal about the matter, two State Committee Members called him.

Now, I believed that in the interest of integrity, Chairman Rich Cebra would have wanted to get the situation straightened out, but Chairman Cebra chose to ignore the method outlined in the State Committee's bylaws and instead of taking the matter to the Executive Committee and handling it internally, he instead went to a lawyer who advised him to declare that appellant "not an affected person."

He also chose at that point to discontinue any and all communication -- whether by telephone, email, or other internet messaging -- with that appellant, as well as myself and other State Committee members representing Penobscot County.

After utilizing the legal loophole of the "not an affected person" variety, the talking points of the Party indicated that only a candidate would be "an affected person," and at that point, State Committeeman Bryan Daugherty, one of the two candidates who was affected by the more than twenty illegal voters filed an appeal. His appeal was filed due to the fact that the illegal suspension of bylaws created an ongoing breach of the bylaws, and per Roberts Rules of Order, that particular appeal has no deadline.

Wednesday afternoon, Rich Cebra sent his "decision" regarding Bryan Daugherty's appeal of the ongoing breach and illegitimate election of County Committee officers to all members of the State

Committee.

In that email, he included a memo from the lawyer, his decision, and a lengthy letter which states at the top of the first page, "This is no way for a party, especially one that values honesty, transparency, a belief in the ability of the people to manage their own affairs and a strong faith in self-governance, to operate.

Well, that was something that every voting member of the Penobscot County GOP Committee can agree with. But as this multi-page letter went on, he peppered it with phrases like, "the Maine Republican Party has worked diligently to operate within the Rules and By-Laws of the Party," and "the Maine Republican Party is not afraid of the truth...we must arrive at it in accordance with the rules and by-laws..."

But he ends the letter with this:

"This panel will conduct a thorough, complete investigation into this controversy and will issue a non-binding report of its findings. These findings will be final, and the Maine Republican Party will take no further action regarding additional investigation, administrative actions or any other action other than those prescribed by the aforementioned directive to review and suggest reforms to the Penobscot County Republican Committee Rules and By-laws.

"Additionally, with this notice, the Maine Republican Party will not entertain or answer any further appeals regarding the January 17, 2013 Penobscot County Republican Committee election of officers."

And therein lies the huge problem: The Chairman of the Maine State GOP says he is interested in honesty, integrity, truth, and all the other qualities he lists in the first two pages of his letter; but when the outcome of this inarguably illegitimate elections is he does not want to change, well, not so much.

A non-binding report which changes nothing but pretends to keep this same sort of illegitimate election and illegal suspension of the rules is not only wrong, but it is a slap in the face to those who followed the bylaws to be legitimate voting members.

It has become painfully clear that I am entirely unable to play even a small part in restoring the State Republican Party to anything even close to principles, honesty, and transparency, and to remain on the State Committee in the face of that revelation would make me part of the infection within that organization.

I am unwilling to be part of that infection, and therefore, I am hereby tendering my resignation. I will be unenrolling from the Party today.

Sincerely,

Michelle Anderson
Former at large State Committee for Penobscot County