

To all members of the Penobscot County Republican Committee, Maine State Republican Committee and those effected by the Penobscot controversy:

First, by way of introduction for those who do not know me, my name is Andy Torbett and I am the Chair of the Piscataquis County Republican Party. The State Chair, Richard Cebra, appointed me to the Executive Committee to represent the Second Congressional District (CD2). I have been selected to sit on the five-person panel to investigate the Penobscot Controversy. Because I am the County Chair that represents CD2 on the Executive Committee and as the controversy is within CD2, I was elected by the panel members to be its Chair.

Yesterday, it came to my attention that perhaps there is a misunderstanding to how testimony is presented to the panel and the nature of the hearing. I hope to draw your attention again to the email, which was sent out to Penobscot County and the State Committee on April 22. In the email, there are some very important stipulations concerning the process to which testimony is presented to the panel.

*“Please forward your **written** testimony concerning the controversy surrounding the Penobscot election of officers to Michelle Dale”.* All testimony must be submitted as written testimony and sent to Michele Dale, who will forward it to the panel. This testimony cannot be submitted for someone else. It must be your own written testimony. Blog posts, websites and Facebook sites will not be accepted.

*“If you have **written** testimony from any individuals who were present at this meeting and witnessed something relevant to the investigation, please ask them to do the same”.* An invitation was given to others in Penobscot, besides those who lodged a complaint, to give written testimony. Again, it must be written and by their own person.

*“Please know when you are submitting **written** testimony that your testimony will only be accepted if you agree to attend in-person to answer any questions the panel **may** have on May 4th or in any following panel meetings.”* The panel may find in reading the written testimony that more questions are necessary to a full disclosure of events surrounding the controversy. We must have the option to call in individuals for further questions if we so choose.

*“These live interviews will be conducted **privately** with the panel, and will **not** be made open to observers.”* **This is not a public hearing.** I am very concerned that many well-intentioned people will make the long trek to Augusta only to find that they cannot have the opportunity to testify. The verbal testimony only comes at the request of the panel, as an addition to your written testimony.

Most of us have known for some time that a five-person panel was to be formed concerning this issue, even before the April 22nd email was sent out. Many had lodged complaints and called upon the State Chair to form this panel. What is surprising to me is that, at this late date, no one has produced a written testimony. I have received one link to a Facebook group, but it was not this person’s own written testimony. Remember, you cannot submit testimony for someone else.

I can then only assume that the aggrieved individuals have either made peace with situation or have no interest in its resolution. So I have set a deadline. If the panel has not received written testimony by 4pm Friday, May 3rd, then, obviously there is no need for a hearing. The panel will not accept any written testimony after this date.

So in summation, if you want your grievance to be heard, you need to write it and send it.

If you are hoping this panel will dissolve, please be aware the panel will convene on whatever written testimony we receive by 4pm Friday the 3rd of May. If you want your side to be heard, please don’t leave it to supposition. Supposition is not testimony. And remember, the May 4th hearing is not a public hearing. You must have submitted written testimony and then been contacted by the panel for additional verbal testimony.

Respectfully,

Andy Torbett

Chairman-Piscataquis County Republican Party

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