

Dear State Committee Members:

As some of you know, I loathe e-mail commentaries (from more or less anyone) on political topics. In the first place I have no time to read them all, and in the second place I am a curmudgeon anyway and no one else's opinion really interests me much.

However, I have recently learned that a good many members of the state committee are strongly opposed to efforts by our legislature to move Florida's primary up in the national pecking order, and, because of the potential gravity of this matter, I have decided to violate my own rule, and dive into the deep end of the fray notwithstanding my transformation into political commentary hypocrite.

I would like to publicly applaud the Florida legislature for having the cajones once again to defy an RNC-endorsed/coerced national primary electoral "system" that gives wildly disproportionate influence in the selection of our nominee (and potentially our next president) to a collection of syrup farmers and ethanol freaks in New Hampshire and Iowa.

In an "ordinary" presidential year, I suppose we could all afford the surreal entertainment that features eccentric New Hampshire postal clerks or wizened Iowa corn farmers forcing the nation's leading presidential candidates to line up to take a number for the privilege of groveling on the subject of ethanol over the cowl of a tractor, or choking down a stack of pancakes and maple syrup while chatting about the this year's prospects for the Red Sox.

However we don't have that luxury this year. 2012 is simply the last call for America. This is it, end game. If Obama wins re-election, America becomes France with baseball. In this year above all, we can take no chances. We do not dare allow a tiny collection of wholly unrepresentative and self-important bumpkins to even POTENTIALLY steer our candidate off course into a narrow path that makes victory in November 2012 even SLIGHTLY less likely. We just can't. (And besides, ethanol and the Red Sox are **both** stupid.)

I don't think Florida is necessarily the best state to go early (that would be replacing one arrogance with another), but Florida is a hell of a lot better than Iowa or New Hampshire on a half dozen grounds, and you have to start SOMEWHERE to break the tyranny of the loony small-fry states. We also matter a LOT more to the national outcome as "swing state alpha".

We have all known since the day we were born that the system that allows Iowa and New Hampshire to ride roughshod over the rest of the country is just plain ridiculous. Only a drunken twit would purposely **design** such a system.

So why do so many of us line up like good little robots to salute this idiocy?

Argument 1 is that we have been warned repeatedly that any challenge to the system will bring "chaos". If Florida disobeys the rules, what next? What is to stop a stampede of other states defying this ludicrous system. Indeed, I agree. To which I say, so what? Our best argument for not defying a stupefying rule is that if we defy it, others will too? ??? Huh? This is a little like saying "if we run out of a burning house, so will everyone else". Let them! In fact, let's start the fire! Let the revolt grow. Let's go recruit other revolutionaries!

Argument 2 against the early primary is that we will be punished by the RNC and sent to bed without dessert (i.e. 1/2 of our election delegates). I understand this concern. I know how many of us work so very hard for the honor and privilege of being convention delegates. You have all earned it to be sure, but I think the price is too high. If torn between the choice of (a) mattering more in the defeat of Barak Obama, defying an idiotic system, but losing my delegate opportunity on the one hand, or (b)

matter less in the campaign, but being a delegate on the other hand, I pick (b) matter more and losing my seat. And it's not a close call.

Argument 3 against Florida's civil disobedience this year is the national convention in Tampa. How embarrassing would it be if the host state has a half-strength delegation? The answer is "a little", but so what? This hurts our candidate how? Wouldn't the voters of Florida be proud of us if we all stood up and said "we defied the system and took our lumps for Florida"?

I didn't become a party activist to get privileges or to follow the rules laid down by 150 something school marms at the RNC bent on enforcing an idiotic rule on the grounds that it's been there for a long time and any challenge to it will inevitably lead to the complete breakdown of civil order and fornication in the streets. I joined the system to MAKE A DIFFERENCE. 2012 is the single most important election year since at least 1980. I want to MATTER. I want FLORIDA to matter. If we run our primary in April, we matter either much less, or hardly at all. We NEED to enthuse our troops HERE, not in Iowa or New Hampshire. HERE is where 2012 is won or lost, not in a corn field or maple forest.

Furthermore, the RNC needs us WAY MORE than we need the RNC. It's time they understood that. For better or worse, in most presidential elections, 40-45 states matter hardly at all. Of the 5-10 that are actually up for grabs, Florida is the biggest prize. I cannot for the life of me understand why Florida is afraid of the RNC. They ought to be TERRIFIED of Florida. And this doesn't take into consideration the fundraising that comes out of Florida. What are they gonna do? Not spend money here? Lose the presidency to make their point? Ha, fat chance.

Let's tell our legislators we are with them. Let's tell America that Florida is leading the battle against a laughing-stock system so stupid that even South Park hasn't bothered to satirize it yet. Let's all say we are willing to make a sacrifice to make the process better and improve our chances of beating Barak Obama on election day 2012. Let's end the madness.

Thanks.

Lew Oliver
Orange Chair