

Who should make the decisions about how the Republican Party of Texas operates?

Most of the decisions about how we currently operate were put into Texas Election Code decades ago when Democrats controlled the Texas legislature. Those outdated laws require all parties to operate the same and set a status quo where the state micromanages our private organizations.

But as Republicans we know we have the right to Freedom of Association guaranteed in our constitution's first amendment, and that government interference should always be the bare minimum necessary.

On Monday the Elections Committee of the Texas House will hear two bills that together make it official that the state recognizes our right to self-determination - HB4082 and HB4083. These simple bills make it clear that our rules will control how we operate, not outdated laws.

These two bills do not change anything at all about how we choose to manage our operations. They simply acknowledge that we have the right to make changes if and how we see fit. Any changes would come later after much debate and deliberation and through our rules change processes.

This approach differs from HB2640, the Democrat-sponsored 55-section compilation of wish list items. Even when the particular changes - like whether or not their state executive committee is elected by congressional district vs. senate district - are ones we don't have any opposition to, it is a much less ideal approach to continue implying that the state has the right to control those kind of internal details of the parties.

HB2640 as introduced has items which are of concern, some of which are in direct opposition to planks in our platform. However, the Democrat party staff and Rep. Cortez's office have made it clear they will remove any such items before a revised bill is voted on by the committee. On Monday the introduced version (not the revised version) of the bill will be laid out and open for public testimony. The revised version of the bill should be voted on by the committee at a later meeting. We will be watching this bill closely to make sure the revised version doesn't have any provisions that go against our platform or principles, and if so, then we will be able to support it.

As the length of 2640 shows, at best the way the election code micromanages party internal operations is unnecessary and inappropriate. At worst it can cause big problems. Unfortunately there is another bill also being heard Monday - HB4255 - that seeks to mandate how we control internal bank accounts. We're working with the author and others to avoid the significant problems that bill could bring in its current form.

If you agree that the right to determine how our party operates only belongs with us, please join me in supporting HB4082 and HB4083, opposing HB4255 in its current form, and on HB2640 expressing that we have concerns with the introduced version but are hopeful to support the revised version - especially if you live in the district of any of the

committee members listed below. And please join me at the committee meeting at 8 AM Monday morning in the Texas Capitol room E2.016 to testify to that effect.

Feel free to call me at 512.623.0276 if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Thank you,

James Dickey
Chairman, Republican Party of Texas

House Election Committee
Chair: Stephanie Klick (R)
Vice Chair: Philip Cortez (D)
John Bucy (D)
Dustin Burrows (R)
Briscoe Cain (R)
Art Fierro (D)
Celia Israel (D)
Mayes Middleton (R)
Valoree Swanson (R)