

RHINEBECK REPUBLICAN REFLECTIONS

Rhinebeck Republican Committee Newsletter - April 2016



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UPCOMING EVENTS

**MAY 17 - DC GOP
CONVENTION**

**JUNE 4 - SPRINGTIME
FAMILY RIFLE
SHOOT**

COMMENTARY

This space will normally be filled with insights from Republicans at various levels of government. Since this is our first newsletter, however, we decided to explain the purpose of this newsletter.

Federal, state and local governments are in transition. "*We the People*" is morphing to "Some of the People" and continually besieged by "*Me the Person*" mentality. Public service for all is becoming personal service for some. Competence, integrity and the rule of law are of waning consequence for government officials and employees. Our once strong economy has been limping along by mortgaging our future while terrorism and waste are on the rise. And, all the while, government accountability is increasingly hidden behind the veil of political correctness.

We, as American citizens, are obligated to hold government accountable. It is our duty to ensure that officials equally protect the liberties of all citizens, spend our tax dollars wisely, facilitate our pursuits of happiness, and perpetuate our democratic society. In other words, we are obliged to ensure that our governments are working for all of us, each and every day.

We, as the Rhinebeck Republican Committee (RRC), are a group of individuals that in and support:

1. The Constitutions of the United States of America and of the State of New York,
2. Individual freedom and personal responsibility,
3. A free market that creates ample jobs for our citizens,
4. Lean, efficient government and low taxes,
5. Clear accountability of all elected and appointed officials.

So, the purposes of this newsletter are to:

1. Explore how the political committees advocate for enrolled voters;
2. Remind voters of the obligations and duties of elected and appointed officials;
3. Suggest metrics that illustrate government accountability;
4. Explain how voters can influence governments.

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"The Republican party does have a lot of work to do. But changing our principles is not a winning strategy. We need to modernize, not moderate." - Bobby Jindal



COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP - Rhinebeck

The Rhinebeck Republican Committee (RRC) is dedicated to informing voters of issues that are important to our community and to promoting candidates that will work for good government. The Town of Rhinebeck is divided into seven election districts. Two cover the Village and five cover the rest of the Town. There are two classes of committee members. Each district has two elected county committee members who represent the district to the Dutchess County Republican Committee.

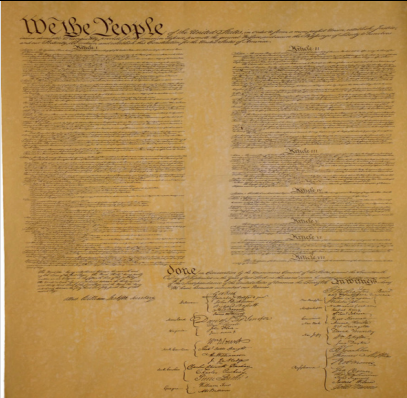
District Representatives

District 1: Dennis McGuire & Wayne Rifenburgh
District 2: Bruce Washburn (C) & Kim Williams
District 3: Jeff Cotter & Jim Coughlin (VC)
District 4: TBD & Elijah Bender
District 5: Joyce Maier & Herman Tietjen
District 6: Bill Dowden & Ryan Dowden
District 7: Linda Murray & Richard Murray

The committee members circulate candidate petitions within their districts. There are also town members at large who are involved in all aspects of the committee but have no standing on the county committee. Ideally, committee members understand the pulse of the community. They know what the issues are and evaluate the viability of alternatives for resolving the issues.

Future issues will have articles about the County, State and National Committees or articles about a specific election district.

CONSTITUTIONS - We trust that our elected officials will take their oaths of office to heart and will act accordingly during their terms.



Presidential Oath of Office - "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

The Congressional Oath of Office - "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation of purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am to enter. So help me God."

New York State & Local Officials Oath - "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the constitution of the United States, and the constitution of the State of New York, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of _____ according to the best of my ability."

QUESTION OF THE MONTH - The oath of office is a contract with the citizens of the jurisdiction to which an official has been elected or appointed. The oaths don't provide leeway for personal or political preferences, competence, abilities, race, creed or gender. Yet many officials who have broken their contracts are tolerated, defended, protected and even promoted. **Is the oath of office binding or merely an archaic ritual?**

"The basic functions of government are to defend the nation against foreign enemies, to prevent coercion of some individuals by others within the country, to provide a means of deciding on our rules, and to adjudicate disputes." - Milton Friedman, Why Government Is the Problem

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PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY - We believe that Americans have a personal responsibility to elect officials who will preserve individual freedom by supporting and defending the Constitution. Nationally, however, only 80% of voting age people register to vote and local participation varies widely from one year to the next.

When looking at 2000-2015 Rhinebeck election results, we noted that actual ballots cast for a particular position were often much less than voter turnout. 86% of un-cast ballots came from uncontested races while 14% came from voter indecision or voter error. So, it would seem that as a community we need to do a better job in encouraging people to run for office. As citizens, we need to get out to vote and then vote for the best candidates.

Samples of the average, minimum and maximum ballots cast are in the table to the right.

	AVG.	MIN.	MAX
President	75%	70%	79%
Governor	55%	52%	57%
County Executive	41%	32%	49%
County Legislator	40%	26%	49%
Town Supervisor	40%	20%	50%
Town Councilman	38%	17%	51%
Town Justice	34%	21%	44%
Town Hwy Super	38%	20%	50%
Town Assessor	28%	19%	43%

FREE MARKET ECONOMY - Our national economy grew by 80% from 1999 through 2014 and our state economy grew 92%. Inflation grew by 70% over this period while the national population grew by 15% and the New York State population increased 5%.

In 2014, New York's average unemployment rate was 6.7% (or 605,000 people) while the national average was 6.6%. So, while the economies grew, they didn't grow enough to create ample jobs for our citizens.

LEAN, EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT - Government spending grew more than the economy, inflation, and population from 1999 through 2014. Nationally, federal spending increased 106%, state 122% and local 86%. New York's state government spending increased 114% while local spending increased 89%.

In 2014, New York's governments cost \$16,112 per capita while the average of the other states was \$9,860. Overall, New York's governments are neither lean nor efficient, unless they are providing additional discretionary services that are not available in the other states.

LOW TAXES - All types of local, state and federal taxes pay for the majority of government spending. When we consider changes in the population, economy (adjusted for inflation) and taxes, we can see in the table below that many individuals, nationally and in New York, had less spending power in 2014 than they did in 1999:

Per Capita	US		NY	
	1999	2014	1999	2014
Economy	\$57,314	\$62,666	\$63,960	\$74,407
Taxes	\$12,072	\$18,609	\$14,968	\$26,865
Individual Spending	\$45,241	\$44,057	\$48,992	\$47,542
	79%	70%	77%	64%

New York's state and local taxes per capita were \$14,528 in 2014 compared to the rest of the states average of \$8,778. Our higher than average taxes are influenced by the leanness and efficiency of our governments. Our higher than average taxes hinder our economic growth.

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ACCOUNTABILITY - Elected and appointed officials influence our lives and communities through policies, processes, regulations, taxes and management practices. The previous items in this newsletter used data from the U.S. Bureau Of Labor Statistics to illustrate what the RRC believes in and the impact of government officials over time. 1999 was selected as the baseline year because our country has gone through significant changes since then. Each of us, as citizens, ought to be aware of what our officials have done, are doing, and should be doing.

SCORECARD - A scorecard is a way to track accountability of officials on important matters such as the economy, government efficiency and taxes. The RRC scorecard will illustrate various topics discussed in this and future newsletters, wherein:

1. New York state government performance will be compared to the average of the other states;
2. Dutchess County government will be contrasted to other NY counties outside of NYC;
3. Rhinebeck school, fire protection, and town/village will be compared to peers in Dutchess.

The scoring criteria is: **GOOD** if the performance of a level of government is at least 5% better than the comparison, **FAIR** if within +/- 5% of the comparison, **POOR** when the entity is worse than the comparison by 5% or more. Comparisons start with 2014 because it is latest year for which sufficient information has been published. Please keep in mind that the ratings in the scorecard are indicators of probability and not absolutes.

The scorecard from this issue is:

TOPIC	FACTOR(s)	BASIS	NY State
Sufficient Economy	Unemployment Rate	Labor Force over 16	FAIR
Lean, Efficient Government	Government Spending	Per Capita	POOR
Low Taxes	State and Local Taxes	Per Capita	POOR

It looks like we need to:

- Unleash the economy by getting rid of low/no value government regulations and functions to provide more private sector jobs;
- Pare down tax funded discretionary government spending through alternative approaches to services delivery;
- Lower taxes so that businesses and individuals can invest in the economy.

A LOOK AHEAD - In the next issue we hope to have a commentary from a county official, an article about the county committee, and an update on political happenings. We'll also dive into local government performance.

If you have questions, ideas for newsletter articles or wish to contribute an article, please email Bruce Washburn at BWW876@gmail.com or contact your district representative.