



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on August 16, 2013

Establishment Control of GOP Challenged at RNC Summer Meeting

The battle lines in the war over the future direction of the Republican Party are being drawn and the fighting will likely be fierce.

Yesterday (Wednesday, August 15) the Republican National Committee kicked off its [summer meeting at the Westin Waterfront Hotel in Boston](#) and many party faithful are attempting to roll back rule changes effected by attorney and GOP power broker, Ben Ginsberg.



Ginsberg has the reputation of being a “brusque, hard-driving lawyer” with as many detractors as admirers in the Republican Party.

A [report in the Washington Times](#) reminds readers of some of Ginsberg’s GOP bona fides:

He helped lead George W. Bush’s legal team that won the Florida recount battle in 2000, defended the Swift Boat veterans whose 2004 ads attacked John F. Kerry’s Vietnam War record and was among the first to predict that the Supreme Court’s landmark Citizens United ruling would create a campaign finance free-for-all.

Even President Obama grudgingly turned to Mr. Ginsberg this year to serve as co-chairman of a bipartisan effort to protect voting rights — to the alarm of some liberals.

Constitutionalists — particularly those who supported former Congressman Ron Paul in the 2012 presidential campaign — remember Ginsberg for something much more notorious, however.

In 2012, as the Republican National Committee Convention Rules Committee met in Tampa for the party’s quadrennial convention, Ginsberg, at the time Mitt Romney’s campaign lawyer, showed up and pressured members to accept radical changes to the party’s rules governing the binding of delegates and the way rules are to be revised in the future.

According to one of the rules as revised by Ginsberg, every state must amend its nominating process to ensure that their delegations are bound to vote in accordance with the winner of the popular vote as cast at state caucuses or primaries.

Ginsberg’s version of another rule empowers the RNC to bend its own rules to suit their needs at any time without submitting the changes to party members gathered at the quadrennial convention. This unprecedented revision places the control of the GOP in the hands of the establishment candidate without suffering the inconvenience of listening to dissenting voices. In the future, the nomination of an incumbent Republican president is guaranteed and upon leaving office, he will be able to name his chosen successor through manipulation of the party rules.

Put simply, the passage of a radical new rulebook rewritten by Ben Ginsberg was predetermined and a sham voice vote was taken at the convention, sound and fury signifying nothing.

The story in the *Washington Times* reports that the bitter taste left by Ginsberg’s treachery has not left



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the mouth of many in the GOP.

“Ginsberg’s work has left a bad taste in the mouths of not just newly active Republicans, but in many GOP conservatives who have been fighting these battles for a very long time,” said Carolyn McLarty of Oklahoma, chairwoman of the Republican National Committee’s Resolutions Committee.

Virginia RNC member Morton Blackwell, founder of the Conservative Leadership Forum, added that “these Ginsberg power grabs were unprecedented.”

Mr. Blackwell, who served in the Reagan White House, personally wrote RNC Chairman Reince Priebus, urging him to dig in at the RNC summer meeting Wednesday through Aug. 17 in Boston. Mr. Blackwell and his supporters want the word “shall” restored to rules that mandate states choose their delegates, displacing the word “may” that Mr. Ginsberg successfully inserted last year.

“In living memory, no candidate about to become the Republican presidential nominee had ever used his power to generate wholesale changes in the rules of the Republican party at the convention which was about to nominate him,” the veteran Virginia Republican National Committee member wrote in 1,890-word letter to Mr. Priebus that was obtained by *The Washington Times*.

For an establishment Republican like Mitt Romney, Ginsberg’s machinations guarantee that dissident voices will be forever squelched and thus Ginsberg’s contribution to the party is invaluable. One of Romney’s campaign insiders elevated Ginsberg’s contribution to the Republican Party to legendary status, comparing the politico to Michael Jordan.

“It’s hard to put into words what Ben Ginsberg means to the Republican Party,” said [Rich Beeson](#), Romney’s presidential campaign political director, as quoted in the *Washington Times*. “It’s like asking what Michael Jordan did for basketball.”

There are those among the Republican Party grassroots determined not to let Ginsberg’s rule changes make the nomination of establishment candidates a slam-dunk, however.

Liberty Roll, a blog maintained by grassroots activists [reports](#):

Maine Republican Committeeman and Liberty Roll charter member, Mark Willis, is the chief sponsor of the “Resolution to Maintain the Integrity of Procedural Practice at the National Convention.” Mr. Willis will be urging the Republican National Committee to take action on the resolution, which seeks to revert the RNC to operation under a pre-Ginsburg-power-grab version of the rules.

“The Maine delegation, in accordance with their standing resolution passed in early 2013, will continue to call for the 2012 rules to be considered null and void.” Stated Willis, “To do otherwise would legitimize these improperly passed rules and cut the grassroots out of the 2016 election completely.”

Specifically, Willis’ proposal declares “that the Republican National Committee rejects the legitimacy of the method of passage of the 2012 Rules of the Republican Party,” and would require that the RNC “revert to operation under the Rules adopted by the 2008 Republican National Convention.”

A similar, though significantly watered down, amendment was submitted by Virginia RNC member Morton Blackwell. Liberty Roll summarized the intended effect of the Blackwell amendment:

Blackwell’s submitted amendment makes a change to one word within the entire set of 2012 rules



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— changing the word may to shall in rule 16(c)(2). If the amendment passes, here is how rule 16(c)(2) would read before and after the fact (change to the rule is in bold to emphasize the difference):

Current Form: 16(c)(2) Any presidential primary, caucus, convention, or other process to elect, select, allocate, or bind delegates to the national convention that occurs prior to April 1 in the year in which the national convention is held **may** provide for the allocation of delegates on a proportional basis.

Proposed Amended Form: 16(c)(2) Any presidential primary, caucus, convention, or other process to elect, select, allocate, or bind delegates to the national convention that occurs prior to April 1 in the year in which the national convention is held **shall** provide for the allocation of delegates on a proportional basis.

At meetings held on Thursday, the RNC rules committee voted 40-10 to refer both the Blackwell and Willis proposals to a newly appointed subcommittee that will review all primary process rules.

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