



Email tells delegates to applaud -- and stay out of politics at RNC convention

By Craig Westover

Friday, April 18, 2008

Bands, balloons and the chance to rub shoulders with party movers and shakers are part of the allure of being a delegate to a national political convention. But don't delegates play an important role choosing the party's nominee and shaping its platform?

Some delegates to the Republican National Convention Sept. 1-4 in St. Paul have been told to stick to the bands and balloons.

An email, called a "National Delegate Self-Nomination Form," sent to some 7th District GOP delegates warns them that they shouldn't expect much of a role or influence at the convention.



Supporters of GOP presidential candidate Ron Paul — who won six of 12 delegate slots to the GOP national convention at Fourth, Fifth and Sixth District conventions in early April — think the email was directed at them.

"According to the Seventh Congressional District, national delegates are meaningless," said Minnesota state coordinator for Ron Paul, Marianne Stebbins. "They're trying to talk our people out of running."

Among the general requirements for a delegate described in the email — registration fee, responsibility for hotel bills and the commitment to attend the convention — was the unusual expectation to "contribute significantly to the national party and campaign, \$1,000 is almost a minimum."

Potential delegates were advised of an expectation to "contribute to the 'TV image' of the Party by being present, applauding and cheering at the 'right' places, etc."

In addition, the email went on:

Platform ignored

"You should also be aware that, unlike your service as a State or local delegate, your influence on the process is considerably limited. The other primary states will, by convention time, have determined the Presidential nominee. The platform process is divided and the opportunity to participate in even a piece of it is limited. After the convention, the platform is generally ignored. For this reason, the role of National Delegate is generally seen as a 'reward' for long and faithful service to the Party, rather than as a 'representative' to a deliberative body or a 'learning opportunity' for newcomers."

Neil Nelson, chair of the GOP Seventh District nominating committee, sent out the email, but said he didn't write it. So as not to "reinvent the wheel," he said, he used content prepared for another GOP district.

"If I had read it closer, and I should have, I would have made some changes," said Nelson, who stated he was not at liberty to identify the author of the content. "It certainly wasn't intended to discourage Paul supporters."

Nonetheless, fighting the attitude that "after the convention, the platform is generally ignored" is what keeps Paul supporters engaged. Platform, principle and Paul are three P's for the party, they say.

"We're hoping Ron Paul's candidacy can be the springboard for a renewed party of conservative principles," said Stebbins. "The times we've won in the GOP were times we stood on principle."

Here's the text of the email sent by Nelson:

Hello:

I also wanted to mention that you must chose to either run for a delegate position or an alternate position. You cannot run for both. Please fill out the following form accordingly:

National Delegate Self-Nomination Form

You may place yourself in nomination to be a Delegate or Alternate to the National Republican Convention. Please be aware of the following expectations of your service in this capacity.

1. You will be expected to attend. It is not sufficient to allow the alternate to take your place.

2. There are substantial costs.

a. The registration fee alone is generally \$300 or more, and "guests," if you bring your spouse, cost the same.

b. For security purposes, you will be required to stay in the convention hotel, at a cost of \$2-300 per night (5 nights).

c. You will be expected to contribute significantly to the national party and campaign, \$1000 is almost the minimum.

3. You are expected to contribute to the "TV image" of the Party by being present, applauding and cheering at the "right" places, etc.

*****You should also be aware that, unlike your service as a State or local delegate, your influence on the process is considerably limited. The other primary states will, by convention time, have determined the Presidential nominee. The platform process is divided and the opportunity to participate in even a piece of it is limited. After the convention, the platform is generally ignored. For this reason, the role of National Delegate is generally seen as a "reward" for long and faithful service to the Party, rather than as a "representative" to a deliberative body or a "learning opportunity" for newcomers. *****

If you accept and believe you can meet these qualifications, please answer all of the following questions, Yes or No:

1. Do you pledge to attend the National Convention, health permitting?

2. Do you have the financial means to do so?

3. Do you pledge to support the Republican Presidential nominee after the convention?

4. Do you pledge to work for the Presidential candidate AND for other Republican candidates during this campaign season?

Please sign, date, and print your name below. At some point in the Agenda, you will be expected to deliver a short (roughly 1 minute) speech regarding your candidacy, upon which the delegates will base their votes.

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