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May 2, 2005

Honorable Illinois Republican Representatives:

RE: SB600 – Direct election of Republican State Central Committee Members

I urge you as soon as possible to join Representative Parke as a co-sponsor of SB 600, to ask the members of the Rules Committee to move the bill forward, to call for the bill's earliest possible passage and enactment, and of course, to vote for the bill.

SB 600 Background

Since the 1980s, because of an amendment to the Illinois Election Code (IEC) supported by then Governor Thompson, Republican committeemen rather than Republican voters have elected the members of the Illinois Republican Party (IRP) State Central Committee (SCC) for 4-year terms at biennial county conventions. SB 600 would amend the IEC so that Republican voters would again elect IRP SCC members every 4 years in primary elections beginning next year.

The IRP SCC is the legal representative and the governing body of the IRP. It is charged with the duty of organizing and promoting IRP's operations. It consists of 19 people, one from each of the 19 congressional districts. Each SCC member has a weighted vote according to the number of Republican ballots cast in their congressional district in the last primary election. All of the current SCC members will be up for election next year. The position is unpaid. Contact information for the current SCC members is available at: <http://www.ilgop.org/directory/contentview.asp?c=1691>.

On February 25, Senator Lauzen introduced SB 2033 which subsequently was renumbered as SB 600; on March 10, Senator Brady became a co-sponsor; on April 14, SB 600 passed unanimously in the Senate; on April 15, House Republican Leader Cross became the bill's Chief Sponsor and he referred it to the Rules Committee; on April 22, Leader Cross wrote each of the SCC members and others asking for "comments and suggestions as to the necessity and impact" of the bill; on April 27, Representative Saviano became the bill's Alternate Chief Sponsor; and on April 28, Representative Parke became a co-sponsor of the bill.

Reasons why SB 600 should be enacted

Enactment of SB 600 would bring about healthy competition for SCC positions -- candidates would have to provide much more information than they do now about their qualifications, accomplishments, motivations for seeking the position, and their support for the IRP platform. More competition for the positions will result in election of people who are better qualified to govern, organize, and promote the IRP's operations. Direct election would result in better SCC decisions because SCC members would be directly accountable to the Republican voters in their congressional districts.

Generally, under the current method of election there is no real competition -- most candidates for SCC positions run unopposed. Generally, in districts not represented by a Republican Congressman, people with strong political influence like Speaker Hastert; former Governors Thompson, Edgar, and Ryan; IRP National Committeeman Kjellander; and Treasurer Topinka determine who the SCC member will be. Generally, in districts represented by a Republican Congressman, that Congressman determines who the SCC member will be. Generally, SCC members are only accountable to those few people who put them in office. Many believe that Kjellander and people who reject many important planks in the IRP

platform have the greatest influence over the SCC. This unfortunate situation has resulted in a SCC that:

- treated past IRP Chairman Gary McDougal outrageously and rudely;
- rejected the will of Illinois Republican voters last year and filled the Jack Ryan vacancy with Alan Keyes instead of the candidate who Illinois Republican voters gave the second most votes to - Jim Oberweis;
- rejected a petition signed by many IRP leaders and others last year that called for a special convention to elect a new IRP Chairman and to vote to return to direct election of SCC members;
- refuses to post the IRP platform and the IRP by-laws on the IRP website;
- refuses to include on the agenda for any of its meetings a) a discussion the advantages and disadvantages of returning to direct election of SCC members and b) a vote on the issue that makes it clear which SCC members favor returning to direct election and which do not;
- does not encourage IRP leaders, let alone rank and file members, to attend SCC meetings;
- does not post the agendas or minutes of SCC meetings on the IRP website;
- does not include a public comment period in SCC meeting agendas;
- provides only minimal information on IRP's financial condition;
- has not assured that the IRP promptly hires the best possible Executive Director;
- Allows IRP staff to treat people rudely;
- allows the Democrat controlled news media to continue to serve as the primary source information for Illinois Republicans on important developments that involve the IRP;
- has members who reject many if not most of the major planks in the IRP platform and who blame the IRP's problems on those who support the IRP platform; and
- has members who rarely if ever question the actions taken or not taken by IRP chairmen or key IRP staff.

Again, direct election would result in better SCC decisions because better qualified SCC members would be elected who would be directly accountable to the Republican voters in their congressional districts.

In addition, enactment of SB 600 will benefit all Illinois Republicans because it would help increase Republican turnout in primary elections. Republican committeemen would work hard to elect the SCC candidate they believed was best qualified and Republican voters would rely heavily on the committeemen's recommendation.

Arguments that have been made against SB 600

Current SCC members, Charlie Johnston, and others have argued against direct election of SCC member and against SB 600. But those arguments are significantly outweighed by the arguments for the bill.

The main argument against direct election of SCC members is that only candidates who have substantial financial resources and/or substantial name recognition, like incumbent state legislators, could win because SCC candidates would have to communicate with all the

Republican voters in a congressional district rather than just those individuals in the district who have the most political influence. However, generally, people with substantial financial resources and/or strong name recognition have earned those things by being efficient and effective at what they do -- good qualities to have as a SCC member. Further, SCC candidates could dramatically reduce their campaign costs by maximizing use of email and a campaign website. They could publish a campaign website very economically using a host like www.campaignsitebuilder.com. They could use email to bring their campaign to the attention of the Republican committeemen throughout the district and ask those committeemen to recommend them to the voters in their precincts.

Another argument against direct election is that it would dramatically increase the likelihood that state legislators would win, but that state legislators should not be eligible to hold SCC positions because of conflict of interest reasons and because they are more responsive to the Republican legislative leadership concerning issues that impact the IRP than they are to the Republican voters in their district. However, proponents of this argument have not provided any specific examples to support their argument. If their argument has merit, Republican committeemen will not support SCC candidates who are state legislators. Further, concerning IRP issues, there are more reasons for state legislators to be responsive to the Republican voters in their districts than to the Republican legislative leadership. Three of the current SCC members are state legislators - Kirk Dillard, Skip Saviano, and Dave Syverson. Two of them, Dillard and Syverson, have a strong weighted vote. Any amendment of SB 600 to bar state legislators from serving as SCC members would be a "poison pill."

Another argument against direct election is that in those districts with the fewest Republican voters, Democrats could orchestrate enough crossover voting to elect someone who claims to be a Republican but really is a Democrat. However, proponents of that argument have not provided any specific examples to support their argument. Further, orchestrating enough crossover votes would be difficult and unlikely and Republicans in the district and with the help of Republicans throughout the state if necessary could prevent it.

An argument against SB 600 is that its requirement that the IRP chairmen must be a SCC member would improperly limit those who can serve as IRP Chairman. However, if striking that requirement would assure passage and enactment of the bill, I would be in favor of doing that. With SB 600 as it now stands, Andy McKenna could keep his position as IRP Chairman and Jim Nalepa could become the IRP Chairman only if they ran for the SCC position in their congressional district and the Republican voters there elected them.

Organizations and individuals who support SB 600

Organizations that have passed resolutions in support of SB 600 include the Illinois Center Right Coalition and the Illinois Forum. My understanding is that Jim Oberweis and all the Republicans who are considering running for statewide offices in 2006 support the bill. On April 14, Senate Republican Leader Watson and all but three of the Illinois Senators voted for the bill; on April 15, House Republican Leader Cross became its Chief Sponsor; on April 27, Representative Saviano became its Alternate Chief Sponsor; and on April 28, Representative Parke became a Co-Sponsor. The many individuals who have indicated their support for returning to direct election of SCC members include Jon Cox, Dave Diersen, Lidia Downs, Fran Eaton, Earl Gough, Joe Hedrick, Bill Hogan, Doug Ibendahl, Rich Johns, George Kocan, John McNeal, Joseph Morris, Maureen Murphy, Patrick O'Malley, Dan Proft, Bob Redfern, Jack Roeser, Cathy Santos, Craig Simmons, Gary Skoien, Jeff Sykuta, Raymond True, Joe Wiegand, and Jon Zahm.

The Future

As a Republican Precinct Committeeman, I look forward to enactment of SB 600, to highly qualified candidates seeking SCC positions, to strong and positive campaigns for SCC positions, to my selecting the best candidate to support for 6th congressional district, to my

helping that candidate win, to the best possible candidate winning, and to a stronger and more responsive SCC.

Again, I urge you as soon as possible to join Representative Parke as a co-sponsor of SB 600, to ask the members of the Rules Committee to move the bill forward, to call for the bill's earliest possible passage and enactment, and of course, to vote for the bill.

Please let me know what your position is on this very important bill.

Sincerely,

David John Diersen

David John Diersen Background

Legislative Liaison for the Illinois CPA Society and the American Institute of CPAs since 1998, a very active Republican Precinct Committeeman and member of the Milton Township Republican Central Committee since 1999, the Illinois Editor of GOPUSA since 2000, a member of the Illinois Center Right Coalition Steering Committee since 2003, and the First Vice-Chairman of TAPROOT Republicans of Illinois since 2003. Served as a voting delegate at the 2000 and 2004 IRP conventions, served as a Director of the Midwest Chapter of the American Association of Political Consultants 2001-2004 and as a member of the IRP Grassroots Taskforce 2002-2003. I have attended many SCC meetings, I have gotten to know many of the SCC members, and I continue to monitor SCC actions.

Consultant since 1997 when I took early retirement from the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO). 18 years government auditing experience as a GAO Analyst and 9 years collection experience as an IRS Revenue Officer. Arbitrator for the National Association of Securities Dealers since 1998 and for the Better Business Bureau since 2001. Six professional certifications and three masters degrees.

On March 9, I posted a commentary on the Illinois page of www.GOPUSA.com titled "Better process needed for electing Illinois Republican Party leaders;" since March 27, I have posted a commentary titled "Important questions to ask your representative on the Illinois Republican Party State Central Committee;" on April 3, I wrote an open letter to all the Illinois Republican Senators urging them to vote for SB 2033; and on April 29, I posted a poll on the Illinois page of www.GOPUSA.com titled "Who should the Illinois Republican Party State Central Committee member who represents the Republican voters in your Congressional District be the most responsive to?"