



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on October 23, 2022

GOP vs. RINOs in Michigan

GOP leadership in Macomb County, Michigan, is launching a new political talk show after a failed coup attempted to oust their party's executive committee earlier this year. The first episode of *The Inside Track* was posted Friday at the Blue Water Healthy Living [website](#).

[Mark Forton](#), chairman of the Macomb County Republican Party, and vice chair Lisa Mankiewicz co-host the broadcast. They describe it as an effort to inform voters about the political action committees and lobbyists who are running government "behind-the-scenes."



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Election-integrity specialists pinpoint Macomb County as a hotspot of 2020 [election fraud](#) in Michigan. The Concerned Citizens Initiative discovered anomalies to account for 974,917 fraudulent votes in the county, more than six times the margin that gave the entire state to Biden.

Michigan is also home to Detroit's TCF Center (now known as Huntington Place), where the state Bureau of Elections set up its ballot-counting center that year. Mankiewicz says she was there as a certified poll challenger along with Kristina [Karamo](#), the current Trump-endorsed Republican candidate for secretary of state.

They witnessed the same evidence of election fraud reported by many of their Republican counterparts: numerous photocopied ballots all marked for Joe Biden; ballots of unregistered voters accepted and counted; and pizza boxes taped to windows to prevent Republican election challengers from seeing what was happening inside the center after they had been illegally locked out and prevented from doing their jobs.

Though Forton says the 2020 election was "very good" for his party at the county level, evidence of fraud in the presidential race prompted Mankiewicz and Forton to reach out to the Michigan Republican Party. They were shocked when vice chair Meshawn Maddock told them, "You two are the only ones who feel that way."

They knew that to be false, but the more they communicated with other officials, the more it became apparent that there was concerted pushback against launching an investigation.

Forton recalls that he also contacted the Michigan state Senate Republican majority leader Mike Shirkey. The senator's reply was a warning that "people questioning our elections are committing a criminal act."

Shirkey spearheaded a [report](#) by the Michigan Senate Oversight Committee, which asked the state attorney general to investigate - not the election - but people who question 2020 election results. Michigan's Election Integrity Fund & Force [contested](#) the Senate report and called for a full forensic audit of the 2020 election in Michigan.



Attempted Coup

As Forton and Mankiewicz worked to defend their right to question elections, they found that Macomb County election officials, who in the past had been very supportive, became hostile and unsympathetic.

Forton says the situation “culminated in April” when “RINOs” [Republicans in name only] held an illegitimate county convention to oust Forton and the elected members of his executive committee, including Mankiewicz. (Forton had been elected chair in the fall of 2020.)

When Forton’s committee refused to accept the decisions of the usurpers led by party leader Eric Castiglia, the latter sued, billing themselves as the Macomb County Republican Party. The [lawsuit](#) froze county GOP finances for four months, after which county circuit court judge Matthew Sabaugh ruled in favor of Forton and reinstated his executive committee.

However, Forton relates, the same day the ruling came down, Castiglia launched a new Republican group, and state GOP chairman Ron Weiser sent delegates in Macomb County a letter stating that Castiglia’s faction would be acknowledged at the state convention in late August.

“State party bylaws forbid such a thing. Michigan election law does too,” noted Forton. “The judge said so. He said there can only be one Macomb County Republican Party.”

He explained the reason for that exclusivity is because delegates are elected by voters in each precinct to represent them at Republican conventions. “You have to have a legitimate county party for legitimately elected representatives” to represent their constituents, explained Forton.

The infighting confused delegates, but Forton said his county convention was “twice the size” of Castiglia’s. Nevertheless, Macomb County sent two separate delegations to the state convention on August 27.

When the convention met, Michigan’s 82 other counties rejected Castiglia’s delegates and made a motion to seat Forton’s delegates. The vote resulted in an overwhelming 88 percent for Forton. Attendees booed Weiser and Castiglia. Forton believes that the other counties made the act of solidarity because they know the same thing could happen to them.

Battle for Midterms

They also see state party leadership acting against conservative candidates. Forton criticized the Michigan GOP and wealthy RINOs for their lack of support for gubernatorial candidate Tudor Dixon in her campaign against incumbent Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer, a vehement Biden supporter.

He said they are similarly ignoring Karamo and Matthew [DePerno](#), a Trump endorsee who is running for state attorney general.

“It’s almost like they don’t want to win,” Mankiewicz interjected. She pointed to the race between Republican Steven Elliott and Democratic U.S. Representative Rashida Tlaib in Michigan’s 12th District. (Tlaib is currently serving Michigan’s 13th District, but re-districting now places her in the 12th.)

Mankiewicz said Elliott, a Marine and small-business owner who defeated two other established politicians in the primary, “can’t even get a call back from the state party.” Mankiewicz accuses the media of ignoring him, and says the state party refuses to fund his campaign.

“They all say we need to beat Gretchen Whitmer, but we believe after two years of fighting this, Weiser



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and these wealthy families have no intention of beating Whitmer,” Mankiewicz posed. Forton agreed, maintaining that conservative values must rely on grassroots action.



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