



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 7, 2012

Is RNC Blocking Paul Supporters from Holding Events During Convention?

The [Republican National Committee \(RNC\)](#) has snatched up all the reservations at several venues near the site of its national convention in Tampa, Florida in August.

Why would the RNC bother tying up the various fairgrounds and public spaces around the convention center hosting its national convention?

Perhaps to prevent supporters of Ron Paul from holding a planned “Paul Festival” at the Florida Fairgrounds during the entire weekend before the Republican Convention in Tampa. Event coordinators have announced that the festival will include “music from world class talent, speakers, workshops, seminars, film project premiers, celebrities and entertainment.”

Naturally, representatives of the GOP deny that they have locked up these locations in an effort to prevent Paul supporters from using them. They insist that they need the additional space, although they haven’t yet decided how they will occupy the facilities.

[According to Bryan Siemon](#), an organizer of one such pro-Paul celebration, if Republican officials continue to stonewall groups trying to schedule time at one of these various venues, there won’t be enough time to properly plan and promote the event.

For their part, Republican leaders worry that a loud Paul contingency could draw attention away from the [presumptive nominee](#) — former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney.

GOP bigwigs are right to worry. Ron Paul attracts [standing-room-only](#) crowds wherever he goes and the audience is typically young, animated, and informed. These are not adjectives often used to describe Romney supporters.

Remarkably, there are some people working for Ron Paul’s 2012 presidential campaign that worry that these big, boisterous “[Paulistas](#)” are giving the Texas Congressman a bad name.

“Establishment Republicans sometimes claim that Ron Paul supporters occasionally get out-of-hand. This has been true, and to the extent that some Paul supporters have exhibited poor behavior [it] not only reflects badly on the individuals involved, but Dr. Paul,” Jack Hunter [wrote June 2 in a blog](#) posted on the official Paul 2012 campaign website.

Out of hand? Would Hunter prefer a less animated corps of supporters? True enough, there was a bit of a ruckus in Louisiana as police roughed up one Ron Paul delegate from the Bayou State so badly that he had to go to the hospital. Is this the sort of “poor behavior” Hunter is pointing out? If so, Mr. Hunter need not worry because the man in question was the *recipient* of poor behavior not the instigator of it.





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Likewise, as an official blogger for the Paul campaign, Hunter should realize that nearly every clash between Paul backers and law enforcement or the Republican Party establishment that call them is the result of attempts by that same GOP hierarchy to prevent Paul supporters from being elected delegates to the national convention in August.

Granted, no one would welcome any violence at any level to erupt on the floor of the national convention, chiefly because Ron Paul, himself, would be the first to discourage any such demonstrations.

There is, however, some virtue in boldly and immovably refusing to bend to the will of those who would otherwise run roughshod over the rules and the rights of those resist to such oppression.

Despite the efforts of Republican officialdom to marginalize Ron Paul and promote Mitt Romney, supporters of the libertarian-leaning Texas congressman are enjoying remarkable success in having their delegates elected at the state GOP nominating conventions being held nationwide in advance of the Republican Convention that will take place in Tampa in August.

Irrefutable proof of the commitment of those very active voters who want to see Ron Paul succeed Barack Obama is found in the [numbers of them who show up](#) and fight for inclusion on the slate of delegates that will eventually represent their states at the national convention.

While certainly laudable and impressively clever, will the delegate strategy pay off for Paul and land him on Pennsylvania Ave?

After all, although Paul's path to the presidency may be a steep climb, if he is able to continue amassing delegates in the state conventions, then he may be able to force a fracture among the throng at the national convention or exert pressure on the platform committee to include more Paul-friendly planks.

That isn't to suggest that a brokered convention is a foregone conclusion or even a distinct possibility, however. It also doesn't mean it can't happen.

Ron Paul's campaign understands the importance of keeping its eyes on the big prey: the White House and not being distracted by the lesser quarry that are primaries that are often no more than popularity contests.

"Taken together, these victories and those yet to happen forecast a prominent role for Ron Paul at the RNC," said Ron Paul 2012 campaign manager John Tate. "They also signal that the convention will feature a spirited discussion over whether conservatism will triumph over the status quo," Tate predicted.

Perhaps at the end of the day, Ron Paul would be satisfied with the placement of some of his pet planks in the platform of the national Republican Party. A commitment to audit the Federal Reserve, for example, would represent official acceptance of one of Paul's most important campaign themes.

Given the depth of devotion to the Constitution on the part of not only Dr. Paul but his supporters, however, it is unlikely that the man or his followers would be content to be thrown a bone by the RNC. Rather, these committed constitutionalists intend to learn and leverage the rules so as to afford themselves the best opportunity to carry their man and his message of peace, sound money, and constitutional adherence all the way to the White House.

It's this very [RNC rulebook](#) that's at the center of the controversy brewing between Ron Paul and the Republican Establishment. The RNC argues that the winner of the popular vote (Mitt Romney in most cases) should also received at least a corresponding percentage of that state's delegates elected at the



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state conventions, while the Paul campaign insists that delegates are empowered by RNC Rule 38 to vote their consciences and cannot be forced to vote for the winner of the state primaries.

Evidence of the RNC's interpretation of its own rule was presented in 2008 when a delegate from Utah refused to vote for John McCain, the winner of the Utah popular vote. The delegate wanted to cast a vote for Mitt Romney. When the matter was referred to the RNC's general counsel, the response was illuminating and likely relevant to the present Ron Paul controversy. The [RNC attorney wrote](#):

[The] RNC does not recognize a state's binding of national delegates, but considers each delegate a free agent who can vote for whoever they choose. The national convention allows delegates to vote for the individual of their choice, regardless of whether the person's name is officially placed into nomination or not.

That is about as clear and definitive a restatement of the RNC position as can be expected.

One way or another, these critical issues of party governance that have potentially historic implications for our Republic, will be sorted out on the floor of the [Tampa Bay Times Forum](#).

Seemingly, the RNC could take a small step toward guaranteeing a peaceful convention experience by relinquishing its autocratic and greedy control over the Tampa Bay venues previously selected by Ron Paul supporters to host their celebrations.

Photo: Tampa Bay Times Forum



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