



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on August 9, 2012

Maine's Pro-Paul Delegates Reject GOP Compromise

In an apparent attempt to bind not only those delegates who support Ron Paul, but the tongues of those delegates as well, the Republican National Committee (RNC) is trying to intimidate the delegates from Maine into casting their votes for the presumptive nominee, Mitt Romney. After being rebuffed by the Maine delegation, the state's Republican Party proposed a compromise and on August 7, Maine's delegation rejected that compromise.



The story begins in May [when 21 of the 24 state delegates chosen by Maine's Republican Party during its state convention](#) were won by people supporting Texas Congressman Ron Paul. Last week, 20 of those 21 delegates (and 20 alternates) received an envelope with a Boston ZIP code (a ZIP code shared by the national Romney for President campaign headquarters) informing them that the RNC had received a request that the entire Maine delegation be barred from being seated at the national convention in Tampa later this month.

At issue is a challenge filed by Charlie Webster, chairman of the Maine Republican Party. Webster claims that 20 of the pro-Paul delegates were elected as the result of shenanigans at the state convention and that they should be replaced prior to the opening of the national convention in Tampa.

A committee of GOP bigwigs from around the country is scheduled to meet later this week in Washington, D.C., to hammer out an agreement regarding what role the Maine delegation should be permitted to play — if any — at the national convention.

The RNC's "Committee on Contests" will consider not only the challenge filed in Maine, but those in other states as well. Kirsten Kukowski, spokeswoman for the RNC, said the committee will review paperwork related to the challenges this week and will meet again sometime during the week before the convention to conduct final hearings and make a decision.

Regarding the Maine slate of delegates, the challenge was filed with the RNC by Janet Staples, the state's Republican committeewoman, and Peter Cianchette. They claim that state convention rules and applicable rules of parliamentary procedure were violated by the vociferous Ron Paul bloc who dominated the state's delegate-selection process in May.

In the now rejected compromise, Charlie Webster listed five demands to which the delegation would be required to agree:

First, they would have to sign a statement promising to cast their vote for Mitt Romney if Ron Paul's name was not on the ballot at the convention.

Second, Brent Tweed (a Paul supporter) would have to step aside and Webster or state Governor Paul LePage would act as spokesman for the Maine delegation and announce its vote for president at the convention. Additionally, the newly appointed spokesman would do all the talking for the delegation, especially to the media.

Third, the delegation would be forbidden from saying anything negative about Mitt Romney or positive



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about Barack Obama.

Fourth, in return for the foregoing commitments, the Maine delegation would be granted full access at the convention, including to all committee assignments.

Fifth, the challenge to the delegates' election at the state convention would be dropped.

These demands were unacceptable and the entire delegation (including the 20 alternates) refused to accede to the GOP Establishment's demands.

Webster insists that the compromise is fair and in the best of interest of Maine's Republican Party. "I'm doing what I should do and am trying to get our delegates seated," Webster said. "I believe there is a potential that Maine will not be seated. These rules are clear and it appears that ... much of the [state] convention was not held in accordance with the rules."

Tweed disagrees. "It is unreasonable for the Republican Party at either the national or state level, or for any campaign for president, to attempt to pressure the Maine delegation to vote any particular way," [he said in a statement](#). "We will not be intimidated into signing political deals under threat of being unseated. We are accountable to the Maine Republicans who elected us, not the Mitt Romney campaign."

Despite the curious and as yet unexplained fact that the envelope in which the compromise was mailed was postmarked from the same ZIP code as the Romney campaign, Webster maintains that he "never ran the proposal by the Romney campaign."

"I'm optimistic and confident that we will be seated," Tweed said. "We believe that we are the duly elected delegates and we are all going to Tampa."

Regardless of the decision ultimately reached by the RNC committee considering the challenge, the more relevant question is why the Republican Establishment is leaning so hard and spending so much time and effort on the delegation from a sparsely populated state such as Maine. As the RNC knows, the answer to this important question is likely found in the Republican Party rules.

[Rule 40\(b\) of the Rules of the Republican Party states:](#)

Each candidate for nomination for President of the United States and Vice President of the United States shall demonstrate the support of a plurality of the delegates from each of five (5) or more states, severally, prior to the presentation of the name of that candidate for nomination.

There lies the rub. As the situation stands today, Ron Paul has a plurality of the delegations of seven states: Minnesota, Iowa, Nevada, Virginia, Oregon, Louisiana, and Maine. If an appropriate number of delegates from three of these states can be changed into Romney supporters, then Ron Paul would fall short of the "Five State Plurality" threshold set out in Rule 40(b).

With that in mind, it should come as no surprise that the GOP is actively working to bind the delegations in three states (including Maine) to vote for Mitt Romney, just enough to block Ron Paul's name from being offered as a candidate on the convention floor and destroy the illusion of party unity being portrayed by the Republican Establishment.

Despite these efforts by the RNC, the truth behind the facade is found in [this story from Louisiana](#):

Ron Paul forces in Louisiana were willing to employ "dishonest and disruptive tactics" to manipulate voting at the party's presidential caucuses and try to "hijack" the state convention to "overrule the will of nearly 200,000 presidential primary voters," according to a brief filed by the



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Louisiana Republican Party with the national GOP's Committee on Contests.

And, [this one from Oregon](#):

"Texas Rep. Ron Paul won less than 13 percent of the vote in Oregon's Republican presidential primary," *The Oregonian's* Jeff Mapes reports, "[but his supporters now make up at least half of the state's delegation to the national convention in Tampa later this month.](#)" They are mounting official credentials challenges and want full control of the delegation.

Staff at the Ron Paul 2012 campaign have made no official response to this developing story.

Photo of Ron Paul speaking to supporters in Portland, Maine, after the Maine caucus: AP Images



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