

Freedom Focused

There are few South Carolinians that have not heard about the ballot fiasco that emerged during the current election cycle. For many voters in South Carolina the issue has become so complex and difficult to follow that they've simply given up on making sense of it. For those that have followed the controversy and have a basic understanding, they have engaged the battle to maintain a choice between the incumbent and a challenger.

A single incumbent, Senator Jake Knotts of Lexington County, fearing a competitive race, challenged the legal filing status of his opponent, Katrina Shealy. When the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled that Shealy had not properly filed paperwork she was removed from the ballot. The court's decision prompted a firestorm of other challengers being removed from the ballot. It also revealed the inability of incumbents to correct a problem they created. The end result was more than 200 challengers being removed from the June Primary ballot. No incumbents were entangled in the paperwork mess because they had created an exemption for themselves to avoid the requirement.

RINO Hunt and other grass-roots organizations across the State teamed up to collect petition signatures to get the challengers names placed back on the November ballot. Many of the challengers had been recruited by grass-roots activists to unseat legislators, council members and other elected positions. At this time over 150 petition candidates have submitted their petitions to the State and County Election Commissions and are awaiting the August 16th deadline to find out whether or not their names will be on the ballot in November.

Grass-roots organizations throughout the State became fed up with our State government over the last few years because of ever increasing state budgets and a failure to pass legislation such as abolishing the Budget and Control Board, School Choice and Registration By Party, just to name a few. Another issue of concern is the state's roll in job creation. Being a state with one of the highest business taxes and increasing State regulations, hampers our appeal to businesses looking to expand or move into our state. Our state has become addicted to the economic incentives game in order to attract new businesses. This process does virtually nothing for existing businesses and creates an atmosphere where corruption thrives.

Through in-depth research by the South Carolina Policy Council , many grass-roots organizations became aware of the real reason South Carolina has fallen behind other states in our economy and freedom. Their research also enlightened us to reasons good legislation all too often dies before reaching the House and Senate floor. South Carolina has one of the Nation's most secretive government processes as well as arguably the most centralized power structure of any state. These two issues are the core of our reform agenda.

With over 150 petition candidates potentially back on the November ballot, the question becomes, can grass-roots organizations across the state remain focused on freedom or will they become distracted with other issues they deem important. I would challenge all conservatives to remain vigilant in their quest to unseat as many incumbents as possible. The reason is simple; they are the ones that have laid the bricks and mortar that have become barriers to our freedom and prosperity.

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We simply cannot trust them to tear down the walls they've worked so long to build.

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Don't take my word for how corrupt our State has become; our Legislature has been recognized by national foundations as one of the most corrupt states in the nation. Fox Business has a good summary of the report published by the Center for Public Integrity. FreeTimes published a story last week that may expose even a greater level of corruption as well as possible illegal activities by elected officials in our Legislature and County Councils in South Carolina.

One thing is for sure; when Judges are appointed and re-appointed by the same people that create the law it becomes nearly impossible for truth to be exposed or to maintain freedom of information. When budgets are created and spent by the same people, spending will always expand and taxes will always increase to keep up with the demand. As long as legislators "police" themselves through ethics commissions they create, very few convictions of un-ethical behavior will be imposed. That is the reason poor behavior by legislators has become the norm.

The Palmetto Liberty PAC created a scorecard of legislator's voting records which helps identify those that vote to maintain the status quo. By looking at the recorded votes we can see who is mixing the mortar and laying the stones of barriers to freedom. This scorecard became very helpful in determining which incumbents needed to be replaced.

We have a trifecta of conservatism in South Carolina. With research from organizations like the Policy Council, watchdog organizations like Palmetto Liberty PAC and strong grass-roots organizations such as RINO Hunt, Tea Parties and 9-12 organizations, we have a golden opportunity for real reform. Add to the mix more than 150 petition candidates that are willing to tear down the barriers to freedom and this may be the "perfect storm" of reform.

Will South Carolinians remain focused on the task at hand for the next three months or will they allow the illusive search for Obama's birth certificate distract them? Will they allow the not very likely threat of unions invading our state or the possibility of martial law to distract them? Since South Carolina has one of the best Congressional Delegations in decades and we have no U.S. Senators up for reelection will they focus on state and local elections?

My hope is that citizens across our state will recognize the opportunity to make South Carolina the freest state in the nation by replacing the establishment good-ole-boys in Columbia that have created the secretive system and consolidation of power they have. Anything that detracts from this goal will be welcomed and fostered by the very people that need to be replaced.

Harry Kibler

Founder – RINO Hunt