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To:

Subject: Falsehoods/Clarifications

I write to you as a fellow member of the State Executive Committee to address a disturbing trend for the Tennessee Republican Party.

Over the past 72 hours, I have become concerned that the developing tone and direction of the race for chairman will negatively impact the party. We need look no further than the mess the Democrats made of their election and the aftermath to understand how quickly a party can be damaged if the process is not conducted with integrity. We should not allow this election to damage the health of our party or diminish the accomplishments of the past year.

Chairman Smith and I have both received multiple calls from members asking for clarification of charges that have been leveled at the party by supporters of candidates for chairman. In several cases, I have addressed the concerns over the phone. But it has now become evident that the comments are very widespread and must be dealt with. **Let me be absolutely clear.** The TRP is taking no position on the chairman's race. We hope the candidates will put forward their platforms in a respectful manner and compete for your vote. But when the accusations reach the level of attacking Chairman Smith's administration of the party, it's time to step up and present the facts.

I wish to take a moment to list these charges and give you those facts:

Falsehood: The Party is "broke".

A member of the committee is claiming to have reviewed the books of the TRP and determined that we are broke. This member has gone so far as to say we do not have enough money to make it to Statesmen's Dinner on July 25.

This member is not on the Finance or Administrative Committees. She has not reviewed the finances of the party but instead has been working with our comptroller to review the Victory 2008 records to determine which counties have not reimbursed the TRP for McCain/Palin material the TRP supplied during the fall campaign. The statement that we are out of money is incorrect. Three weeks ago, Chairman Smith held a conference call with the Finance and Administrative Committees to make them aware of our status and an unexpected expense that had to be addressed. To my knowledge, every member on the call was comfortable with our financial position.

Falsehood: Donors (notably the Gregory family) are leaving the TRP

The same committee member has made statements to the effect that TRP has been "cut off" by the Gregory family, former owners of King Pharmaceuticals. The Gregorys were strong supporters of the TRP and our candidates for several years and we are appreciative of their support. For their efforts to elect conservatives in Tennessee, they were mercilessly attacked by the liberal media and the Tennessee Democrat Party (the same Democrats who took \$50,000 from convicted felon Norman Hsu and have never returned it).

Roughly three years ago, the Gregorys understandably scaled back their political giving and recently closed their PAC. They did not substantially participate in our achievements last year and, as you know, we did just fine. Our financial supporters remain committed to extending our legislative majorities and electing a Republican governor next year.

It would be inappropriate to discuss actual financial figures and recent fundraising events in a public forum such as this (we all know how easy that "forward" button is to use) so if you would like to discuss either in more depth, feel free to give me a call at 615-269-****.

Falsehood: A vendor has not been paid

In order to back up her claims of financial trouble, this member has made claims that she has been contacted by a vendor for her assistance in non payment for an order placed by the TRP last year. In fact, the order she speaks of was for \$17,000 worth of "Women for McCain/Palin" T-shirts that was placed in the name of the TRP but never authorized by the TRP and we were not made aware of the order until after the campaign was over. The order was placed in the belief there would be large events surrounding the Nashville presidential debate and could be sold. The day before the debate, the McCain campaign canceled all watch parties and rallies leaving the Women's group with T-Shirts they could not sell. We are working with the individual who placed the order to clear her of this debt as she was doing what she thought was right, but suggesting this is an example of financial difficulties at the TRP is a gross misstatement of fact.

There have been other misstatements thrown about regarding TRP staff and charges I have heard regarding the candidates that I will not get into here. That's not my purpose. But I hope in their zeal to promote their candidate, all will keep in mind the future unity of the party must be the primary concern. Tearing down the party in the pursuit of helping your candidate win is not the right course.

In addition to being the most successful chairman in recent history, I believe you will agree with me that Robin has also been the most respectful of the committee. She is always up front with the members and she has been very clear in her determination that this process will be fair and transparent but we will move aggressively to counter any falsehoods or misstatements that endanger the health or reputation of the party. If there were anything wrong, she would tell you.

It is my hope that this message will be a restart allowing all candidates and their supporters to reconsider their approach and honor our party in the way they conduct themselves in the days ahead.

We are all owed the opportunity to make our decision on fact, not falsehood.

We have before us the most important decision our party leadership has made in a generation. The next chairman will either seize the historic opportunity of 2010 or squander the chance of a lifetime for Tennessee Republicans.

I look forward to seeing you on May 30.

Mark Winslow

Tennessee Republican Party
Executive Committee, District 19