

TO: ELECTORAL REFORM COMMITTEE, INDEPENDENT
VOTING.ORG and INDEPENDENT OHIO

FROM: RICK ROBOL

DATE: 22 SEP 2013

**NOTES ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2013 HEARING OF PRESIDENTIAL
COMMISSION ON ELECTION ADMINISTRATION**

On September 20, independents from Ohio and Kentucky made presentations to the Presidential Commission on Election Administration (“PCEA”). The PCEA met in Cincinnati, Ohio at the Duke Energy Convention Center. The 10-member Presidential Commission is tasked with presenting recommendations to the President about how to “improve the voter experience.” The Commission was co-chaired by Robert F. Bauer, general counsel to the Democratic National Committee, and Benjamin L. Ginsberg, who served as national counsel to the Romney presidential campaign and is now counsel to the Republican Governors Association. [See Photos #2 and 3, attached].

Independents attending included Ohio independents Mary Rook, Jonathan Lippincott, Sadie Stewart, and Rick Robol, as well as Kentucky independent Mark Ritter. [See Photo#1, attached, depicting, from left to right, Sadie Stewart, Rick Robol, Jonathan Lippincott, Mark Ritter and Mary Rook]. Prior to the meeting, each independent had each registered to speak through Mark Nejbauer, the designated federal officer for the Commission.¹

It appeared that during the course of the day’s presentations, approximately 120 individuals were in the audience at various times. These included presenters from the various panels; state and local election officials; representatives of groups interested in issues affecting voting by the military, disabled persons, elderly persons, and other election procedures; and general members of the public.

The Commission divided the hearing into a series of separate presentations. The focus was exclusively on barriers to voting. Prior to the public presentations, the Commission heard from various panels comprised of election administrators, academicians, professional politicians and expert witnesses. These included

¹ Cynthia Carpathios, the Founder of Independent Ohio, took the lead in helping to organize the presentations prior to the meeting and in providing a seamless “hand-off” to Rick, who helped to coordinate field operations.

presentations on several topics on election technology and procedures, such as computerized systems for voting identification and tracking. Each presentation focused primarily on the interests and needs of political parties, of Republicans and of Democrats. None of the presenters discussed the rights of independent voters or the topic of barriers to participating in elections.

The Commission did not begin presentations by the public until approximately 3:30 pm. Prior to the hearing, Rick Robol had been advised by Mark Nejbauer that speakers from the general public would be allotted 5 minutes. Approximately three days before the meeting, Mr. Nejbauer had advised Rick that speakers would be allotted only 3 minutes. Upon arriving and checking in with the administrative staff for the Commission, Rick had been advised that he had been scheduled to go first among the presenters from the public audience and that all presenters would receive 3 minutes.

During a break, approximately 5 minutes just prior to the commencement of the public presentations, Co-Chairman Ginsberg advised Rick Robol that he had changed the order of presentations, with the presentations by independents to be made collectively-- as a group-- because the Commission had "previously heard from the independents." He did not specify the amount of time to be allocated to each presenter but Rick inferred that the independent presenters might be allotted less than 3 minutes per speaker. Out of Mr. Ginsberg's presence, Mr. Nejbauer advised Rick that he would endeavor to ensure that each independent speaker would receive 3 minutes.

When called forward, the independents sat together, and joined in support of one another. They each adapted their presentations to complement the prior speakers; to ensure that each gave a different, additional perspective on the independents movement; and to avoid redundancy. All presenters gave clear, concise, cogent presentations. The presentations were telecast in "real-time" via the web, and recordings are currently posted on the website for the PCEA (www.supportthevoter.gov).

After the presentations by the independents, portions of the audience seemed almost to "buzz" about the independents movement. Several audience members approached independent speakers to thank them for speaking out for the American people. Several other speakers during the public session acknowledged the justness of the independents' cause.

Independent presenters reached out to other members of the audience. These included various members of the League of Women Voters, Common Cause, the ACLU and the Ohio Fair Elections Network (“OFEN”). During the sessions preceding the public presentations, Rick Robol was able to speak briefly with Camille Wimbish, Esq., the Election Administration Director for Ohio Voice and Carrie L. Davis, the League of Women Voters’ representative to OEFN. The discussions were limited due to time constraints, but focused on the joint interest in their respective organizations on working together to keep each other apprised on issues relating to fair election procedures.

Several members of the audience approached independent presenters after the session and expressed their gratitude for saying things about electoral reform that “needed to be said.”

The Commission adjourned the hearing at approximately 5:00 pm. At the adjournment of the hearing, the independent presenters continued to speak with various members of the audience, and exchanged courtesies with various members of the Commission. Jonathan Lippincott acted as photographer for the independents and helped to develop a photographic record.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard (“Rick”) T. Robol

September 22, 2013

Columbus, Ohio





