

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 6, 2008
Richard Hayes Phillips, Ph.D.

Last night I posted a compilation of election results from Tuesday's presidential primary in Texas, showing that in 21 counties there were no votes cast in the Republican primary, and in three counties there were no votes cast in the Democratic primary. (The original posting is appended). I asked for an explanation, and I received one from David Rogers, an attorney in Austin, Texas, described as a supporter of election integrity.

As I had noticed, the 24 counties in question are quite sparsely populated, accounting for 0.73% of the registered voters in the State of Texas. Rogers explained that a number of these counties "have no county chairmen (particularly on the Republican side). With no county chairman, there is no one to organize or run a primary. Perversely, some of the counties with no Republican chairmen consistently go Republican at the top of the ticket in November, but all the local officials are Democrats."

I was startled by the explanation. It seems that there were no Republican primaries in 21 counties, and no Democratic primaries in three counties. This would explain the numbers, but it would still be a fact that voters of one party or another are disenfranchised, countywide, in many counties in Texas. To me, this seemed unacceptable in a democracy.

Rogers replied that, unacceptable or not, this is the most likely explanation for the results I observed. "Republicans have been disenfranchised like this in Texas for over a century (in fact, getting the number of no-Republican-primary counties below 25 is a recent and remarkable achievement.)"

Rogers explained that while ballots, voting machines, and election workers are all paid for by the state government, the local parties at the county level have to bear the costs of administration and accounting; and they have to find someone to do the paperwork, and somewhere to store the paper. "The costs in time and money to the parties aren't much, but they aren't nothing."

"The failure is almost entirely organizational," Rogers said. "The state party tries to help the local counties some, so which counties have no party changes some from year to year, but the state party can't force the locals to organize if they don't want to."

"If there aren't enough Republicans in a county to organize themselves and pay the costs required," Rogers concluded, "I would say the Republicans are self-disenfranchising." A "party whose members can't bestir themselves enough to set up a primary obviously aren't that interested."

I deeply appreciate Rogers' explanation. In short, political parties at the county level can decide not to participate in a primary election by deciding not to organize for it and not to pay administrative, accounting, and storage costs. In the disinterested counties, interested voters must undertake to organize the primary themselves and to find some way to bear the financial burden, or vote in the other party's primary, or not vote at all.

For the record, in the 21 counties in which there was no Republican primary last Tuesday, Kerry outpolled Bush by 21,089 to 19,732 in the 2004 presidential election, and Bell (the Democrat) outpolled Perry (the Republican) by 9,508 to 6,820 in the 2006 gubernatorial election. In the three counties in which there was no Democratic primary last Tuesday, Bush outpolled Kerry by 3,194 to 456 in 2004, and Perry outpolled Bell by 1,279 to 208 in 2006.

The fact that these counties are sparsely populated does not make me feel any better about the disenfranchisement of their voters. There are 93,131 registered voters in these 24 counties. Failure to engage in political organizing should not be grounds to deny or abridge the right to vote.

But far be it from me to tell the State of Texas how to run its elections. In the State of New York we have our own methods of voter disenfranchisement. Voters had to declare their party affiliation by October 12, 2007 in order to vote in the presidential primary of February 5, 2008.

Richard Hayes Phillips, Ph.D.
March 5, 2008

Didn't anybody notice this?

It is now 24 hours after the polls closed in Texas. In 21 counties, with 100% of precincts reporting, nobody voted in the Republican presidential primary. In three counties, with 100% of precincts reporting, nobody voted in the Democratic presidential primary.

In the 21 counties with no Republican voters, there were 87,919 registered voters, and 36,239 ballots cast, all of them Democratic.

In the three counties with no Democratic voters, there were 5,212 registered voters, and 1,865 ballots cast, all of them Republican.

In Maverick County, all 9,661 ballots cast were Democratic. In Hansford County, all 1,235 ballots cast were Republican.

ONE-PARTY TEXAS COUNTIES, PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY, 2008

County	Registered Voters	Republican Votes	Democratic Votes
Armstrong	1404	369	0
Borden	432	0	139
Brooks	6385	0	3185
Cottle	1230	0	471
Crockett	2654	0	1166
Culberson	1959	0	526
Dickens	1410	0	612
Duval	9331	0	5053
Foard	1043	0	432
Hall	2110	0	813
Hansford	3101	1235	0
Hardeman	2969	0	1086
Hudspeth	1557	0	476
Kent	665	0	250
La Salle	4071	0	1392
Loving	116	0	22
Maverick	26224	0	9661
Reeves	6337	0	2228
Roberts	707	261	0
Stonewall	1087	0	483
Throckmorton	1175	0	513
Upton	2139	0	823
Zapata	7148	0	3190
Zavala	7877	0	3718

But don't take my word for it. See for yourself.

http://enr.sos.state.tx.us/enr/mar04_135_race0.htm

http://enr.sos.state.tx.us/enr/mar04_136_race0.htm

<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/primaries/results/state/#TX>

Election officials in the State of Texas have some explaining to do.

Richard Hayes Phillips is the author of the definitive book on the 2004 presidential election in Ohio – "Witness to a Crime: A Citizens' Audit of an American Election." For more information: richardhayesphillips@yahoo.com