



**Republican Party of Virginia**  
*www.rpv.org*

April 21, 2019

Aaron Smith, Chair  
Pulaski County Republican Committee

VIA E-mail

Dear Chairman Smith,

On March 25, 2019, you requested guidance regarding which participants in a mass meeting may vote on the nomination of a Republican candidate for the office of supervisor in a magisterial district. In accordance with the Party Plan, only mass meeting participants who are qualified voters of a magisterial district may vote on the nomination for that district.

In your request, you note an exchange of letters between one of my predecessors and a unit chairman dated March 28, 1989, in which my predecessor held that “only residents of a particular political subdivision could participate in the process, be it convention or primary, of nominating candidates for that particular political subdivision.”

You also note that at a mass meeting in 2015 in Pulaski County, all participants, regardless of residence, were allowed to vote for the nomination of a supervisor in a magisterial district.

Finally, you note that language in RPV’s *Handbook for Mass Meetings, Conventions, and Party Canvasses* (4th ed.) discussing one the one person, one vote rule of mass meetings that further confused your Committee’s analysis of the question.

In order to clarify the requirements of the Party Plan, I offer the following analysis of the relevant provisions of the Party Plan.

Article I, Section A, paragraph 1 of the Plan provides, in relevant part, “All legal and qualified voters under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia ... may participate as members of the Republican Party of Virginia in its mass meetings, party canvasses, conventions, or primaries *encompassing their respective election districts.*” (emphasis added).

“Election district” is defined in Article II as “the City, County, ward of a City, magisterial district of a County, precinct, or portion or combinations of such political subdivision which comprise the area defined by law in which an election is to be held.”

The language of the Plan clearly restricts voting, regardless of the nominating process to the qualified voters of the relevant district—in this case, only mass meeting participants who reside in a magisterial district may participate in the nomination of a supervisor for that magisterial district.

Please note that this rule applies only to the regular nominating processes provided for in the Plan—mass meetings, conventions, party canvasses, and primaries. The rule does not apply to any of the duties and authorities of official committees. In particular, the duty of the unit committee to “determine whether candidate for local and constitutional public offices shall be nominated by Mass Meeting, Party Canvass, Convention, or Primary,” Art. VI, Sec. D, para. 1, is not limited to the members of the unit committee from the election district. Likewise, when the committee exercises its authority under sections E and F of Article VII to nominate after an election district fails to nominate or when a vacancy occurs in a nomination, the authority is exercised by the entire unit committee, not just those members residing in the relevant district. These responsibilities are vested by the Plan only in official committees and not in subgroups of such committees.

This letter constitutes a ruling or interpretation of the Party Plan. Pursuant to Article X, it may be appealed to the Appeals Committee or directly to the State Central Committee within thirty days of the date it is posted on the RPV website.

Sincerely,



Chris Marston,  
General Counsel