



Dude, Where's My Vote?

By Clark Lee, Political Director, Los Angeles County Democratic Party

After hijacking the ballot boxes of Florida in 2000 and Ohio in 2004, the Republicans cooked up another scheme to target the Big Kahuna of Electoral College votes for 2008 – California! Apparently they have not exhausted their bag o' tricks yet. They're about to make Chicago politics look like child's play.

The Republicans are attempting to put an initiative on the June 2008 Primary ballot that would shift a huge chunk of Electoral votes – enough Electoral votes to match the State of Ohio – to the red column. That's enough to swing another Republican administration and prevent any Democrat from winning the White House!

California, like 47 other states, has a "winner-take-all" Electoral College system in which the presidential candidate receiving the majority vote in the state wins all of its Electoral votes. Maine and Nebraska are the only exceptions to this system. California's 55 Electoral votes – the mother lode of Electoral votes – made the state a prime target for Republican shenanigans. The Republican initiative proposal would change the "winner-take-all" system to a Congressional District-based system in which the candidate receiving the most popular votes in each district would win the Electoral vote.

Thomas Hiltachk, uber-partisan Republican attorney who represents the California Republican Party in several legal disputes, was the main guy funding this scheme. A.P. reported that he has deep ties with Bob Perry, one of the infamous financial backers of the Swift Boat Veterans group that deceitfully falsified Senator John Kerry's war records in 2004.

A few weeks ago, the Republicans dropped their attempt after figuring that they didn't have enough support among Californians. In an effort to revive the idea, a group of conservative Republicans picked up the slack and are attempting to revive the effort. They have to get enough money to fund their campaign and collect 433,971 signatures for it to qualify on the June 2008 ballot.

And, guess what? Republican Congressman Darrell Issa announced that he'll step up and fund this scheme. He's the same guy who bankrolled the signature collection for the 2003 California Gubernatorial Recall (Ironically, after it qualified, the Terminator body-slammed Issa out of the run for governor, making him a total tool). Aside from his big checkbook from selling Viper car alarms, this guy has as much credibility as a doorstop – questionable business practices, alleged questionable past, and unethical staffers

(His campaign spokeswoman once posed as a CBS reporter and got caught – by yours truly.).

And that's the type of dangerous schemes we have to stop! They know that Americans are sick and tired of Bush's disastrous presidency. They know that Americans are ready to put a Democrat in the White House to clean up the mess. Most importantly, they know that the only way they can win the White House again is to steal California.

Many newspaper editorials across the state oppose the initiative proposal, citing its destructive nature to California's presidential electoral clout. The *Los Angeles Times* editorial wrote, "It would be foolish to undermine that power by forcing the state to do something in the general election that only two other states do." Even the Governor has distanced himself from the initiative proposal, "I feel like if you all of a sudden in the middle of the game start changing the rules, it's kind of odd...It almost feels like a loser's mentality, saying I cannot win with those rules, so let me change the rules."

"The California Republican Party is oppressed and discriminated against every presidential election year, the states 55 electoral votes go to the Democratic candidate just because more people voted for him."

-Stephen Colbert

True conservatives should oppose this scheme because it is clearly unconstitutional. Doug Kendall of *Slate Magazine* noted that Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution states, "Each state shall appoint, in such manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors..."

The Republican initiative proposal bypasses the legislature and goes to the voters, disregarding the Constitution. Conservatives need to get off their partisan horses and defend the strict constructionist view of constitutional interpretation that they purportedly believe in.

We Democrats welcome a true national debate and reform on Electoral College reform. This initiative proposal is not about democracy. It's nothing more than another power grab attempt.

Democrats have been organizing against this partisan power grab. The California Democratic Party has launched its "Fraud Busters" program, a group of core activists dedicated to stopping the Republican from stealing the state. If we want a Democrat in the White House, we need to mobilize ourselves – young professionals, students, and age-enhanced alike – to fight back! We need YOU to become a Fraud Buster by going to www.cadem.org and signing up. Act today. Act Now!