



From the Chairman



Fellow Members of Our Committee and Friends of Our Party,

The primary elections are finally wrapped up and we have a lot of work to do this summer and fall. I want to give a special welcome to all new and returning members of the CCREC who were qualified in the 2022 primary.

It is time for Republicans in Colbert County to look forward to our Constitution Day celebration that will happen this year on September 15th and the races for the general election that will be held on November 8th. Planning has been taking place for several months already, and I encourage everyone to look for opportunities to get involved. Elections might just happen on one day (at least in Republican controlled states) but winning requires months and even years of preparation, resources, and dedication. Let's pull together and make this happen.

The following is the full list of Republican nominees for the general election in offices that serve Colbert County:

Sen Larry Stutts, dist 6 (unopposed in the general election)

Rep Jamie Kiel, dist 18 (unopposed in the general election)

Kerry "Bubba" Underwood, dist 3 rep (faces Democrat opposition in the general election)

Ernie Yarbrough, dist 7 rep (unopposed in the general election)

Chad Smith, district judge (unopposed in the general election)

Hal Hughston, district attorney (unopposed in the general election)

Justin Gasque, coroner (unopposed in the general election)

Eric Balentine, sheriff (faces Democrat opposition in the general election)

Jarrold Johnson, school board dist 1 (unopposed in the general election)

Steve Stayton, school board dist 6 (unopposed in the general election)

As you can see, there will be two highly contested races, for state representative and sheriff, with opposition from Democrats. I must emphasize here that these races will be highly competitive and will take resources, money, and people all working together to win for Republicans. It will not be easy, but we can, and I believe we will, have a Republican sheriff and state representative for district 3 this fall.

While we are looking forward, it is also wise to reflect on recent events, learn from them, and include these lessons in our future plans. I have included some data and my observations on the recent primary and runoff elections in the next section. It is important to realize that the political landscape has changed significantly in Colbert County over the last ten years and continues to transition. Over 3,000 new voters have registered since the elections in 2018, and races in the Democrat primary have all but disappeared entirely. This puts our Party in the position of conducting a primary election that is more consequential than at any time in history and with a growing and diverse electorate that includes new voters from different places with different ideas. It is important that we



pay attention to what is happening and constantly strive to fulfill our mission of electing conservative leaders who will honor our freedoms, protect our rights, and serve with dignity and accountability.

The next regular meeting of the CCREC will be at Donna and Friends restaurant on Monday, June 27th at 6:30pm.

Phill Green, Chairman, CCREC

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Crossover Voting, Its Impacts, and What Republicans Should Do

The Democrat Party has been alienating an increasing proportion of voters in Alabama for the past several decades and as a consequence their support has been drying up precipitously. Over the last 10 years, the support for their party in Colbert County has diminished to the point that most politicians have decided either to retire or switch to the Republican Party. There have been a handful who have tried to win as Democrats like Roger Bedford, Johnny Mack Morrow, Gale Satchell, Bitsy Moore, and Charley Hovater, but they have not been able to overcome the rising tide of Republican votes. This stunning reversal began in 2012 with the election of the first Republican to office in our county and has led to today when only one Democrat incumbent will run for reelection to a county office in 2022.

Over this ten-year period, interest in Democrat primary elections has waned significantly. With the overwhelming majority of local general elections being won by Republican nominees, it has become a

moot point who wins the Democrat Primary in most cases. Realizing this, voters who voted in the Democrat primary in the past have not pulled a Democrat ballot in recent elections.

This is reflected in the number of votes cast. For instance, in 2012, about 5,500 votes were cast in the Democrat primary election while about 4,500 were cast in the Republican primary. In the most recent primary election held on May 24, 2022, there were 9,099 votes cast in the Republican primary and only 1,933 cast in the Democrat primary. Democrats went from being over 55% of primary election voters to only about 17%.

So, did Democrats just stop going to the polls on primary election day? The answer is “no.” In fact, the total number of votes cast in the primary elections of 2012 and 2022 were about the same. Instead of staying home, the evidence I have found indicates that a large number of voters who voted in the Democrat primary as recently as the 2018 and even 2020 elections instead made the switch and cast votes in the Republican primary in 2022.

This evidence comes from two main sources, the Republican Party’s own voter database, known as the “GOP Data Center” and the Alabama Secretary of State’s office. The GOP Data Center calculates the likely party of voters based on the primary they normally vote in and other data they collect. Using this data and a list of voters who cast a Republican ballot in the primary on May 24th that I obtained from the AL Sec of State, I was able to find 774 voters listed as Democrats who had voted in the Republican primary in Colbert County.



Of course, one might wonder if these new Republican voters are just recent converts. Maybe they are people who have finally seen the light and realized that the Republican Party represents them and their values and that the Democrats have lost their minds? To test this hypothesis, I began to look through the list of 2022 Republican primary voters for specific names of newcomers. In my search I found the names of several prominent Democrat leaders, past and present, including:

- William Hovater and William “Willie” Hovater Jr. Willie is past chair of the Colbert Democrat committee (still listed as chair on the official AL Democrat website). Both have consistently voted in the Democrat primary in the past and 2022 appears to be the first time they have voted on a Republican ballot.
- Tori Bailey, Democrat county commissioner and president of the local NAACP chapter. She has consistently pulled a Democrat ballot in the past and 2022 appears to be the first time she has voted in the Republican primary.
- Billie Underwood, past chair of the Colbert Democrat committee, his email is still listed as the contact on the official Colbert Co Democrat Facebook page. 2022 appears to be the first time he has ever voted in the Republican primary.
- Gale Satchel, former superintendent of Colbert County schools who ran as a Democrat against Republican nominee and current superintendent Chris Hand in 2020. 2022 appears to be the first time she’s ever voted in a Republican primary.

- Jeff Austin, Democrat nominee in the general election in 2018, opposing Republican nominee and now Judge Kyle Brown. Mr. Austin has been a consistent Democrat primary voter until 2022.

While I haven’t taken the time to contact each one of them personally, yet, to ask them about their recent conversions, I am assuming these individuals haven’t actually decided to turn in their Democrat credentials and join the GOP. I rather think it is more likely that they realized that their political opinions and beliefs stood a much better chance of being implemented if they cast a vote for their favorite candidate in the Republican primary.

I want Republican nominees to be chosen by Republican voters. When I say “Republican voters” I mean voters who support our Party’s platform, our county Committee’s Republican creed, and of course our Party’s nominees. Is there evidence that some voters who still think of themselves as Democrats voted in the 2022 Republican primary? It certainly seems so. That being the case, what should we do to stop it? Close the primaries so voters must register by political party and then only vote in their primary? Would this help? Should we change the rules for qualifying candidates for our primary? Would that help? I believe these and other ideas should be considered and discussed at the county and state level. It is important because if we lose the faith the voters have placed in us to stand up for their values, then we have lost everything.

**ALGOP Chairman John Wahl Favors Closed Republican Primaries**

One of the ideas being discussed to deal with the “crossover voting” issue is that of closing the Republican primary election. This means that voters would be required to choose a party affiliation when they register and then only be allowed to vote in that party’s primary. This idea has been discussed for a long time in this state, and it has been the law in many other states. In 2016 at the ALGOP winter meeting in February, Andrew Sorrell proposed a resolution of the state executive committee in favor of closing our primary. His resolution passed with more than 80% of SEC members voting in favor. Apparently, there wasn’t the same support in the legislature or the governor’s mansion, because a bill was never passed to make this the law.

Recently in a radio interview, ALGOP Chairman John Wahl, in the face of several controversial primary races, including that of AL Sen Tom Whatley and Auburn City Councilman Jay Hovey, where crossover voting has been proven to have been a factor in the outcome, endorsed the idea of closing the Republican primary. He went on to say that he would make this the “number one legislative priority” for the ALGOP in the coming session.

I have provided links to some articles about Chairman Wahl’s statements on this subject, as well as an article about the Whatley/Hovey race where a liberal Democrat Auburn professor is quoted as saying he was proud to crossover and influence the outcome of the Republican primary.

Following are two excerpts from one of the articles I thought were important to highlight.

- *Alabama GOP chairman John Wahl has given his [support](#) for closed primary elections in the state, responding specifically to claims that U.S. Senate candidate Katie Britt was “helpful” in electing former U.S. Senator Doug Jones (D-Mountain Brook), according to Alabama Democratic Party executive director Wade Perry.*
- *Wahl stated his concern for how Democrats could be trying to influence elections, saying, “[N]ext legislative cycle, I’m going to encourage closing the primary and having a registered party system where we know only registered Republicans will be voting in the Republican primary.” He added, “For me this is one of my number one targets for the next legislative cycle.”*

<https://yellowhammernews.com/algop-chair-john-wahl-calls-for-closed-primary-system-in-alabama/>

<https://yellowhammernews.com/7-things-closed-primaries-could-come-to-alabama-house-passes-protection-for-sctus-as-pro-life-groups-are-under-attack-and-more/>

<https://yellowhammernews.com/sen-whatley-vows-to-ensure-all-republican-votes-are-counted-in-one-vote-showdown/>

June Agenda

Our next meeting is scheduled for June 27th. We will need to approve minutes from past meetings and also the treasurer’s report covering expenses in May.



This month we will hear from Reagan Huguley, who will tell us about serving as an intern this summer in Governor Ivey's appointments board. Reagan is the daughter of Waylon and Melanie Huguley. Waylon is a member of the CCREC, representing the 2nd district.

Reagan is an upcoming sophomore at the University of Alabama where she is studying



Marketing in the Culverhouse School of Business. Her plans are to pursue a double major in Marketing and Political Science with a minor in management. She is also on the Pre-Law track.

During the last semester of her freshman year at the University of Alabama, Reagan applied for a summer internship to work in Governor Kay Ivey's Office. After submitting her resume and making it to the interview phase, she was selected along with 10 other college students from across Alabama for the six-week internship. Reagan completed her final exams in Tuscaloosa on May 6th and reported to Governor Ivey's office on May 9th

where she was assigned to the Appointments Office.

The Appointments Office supports Governor Ivey in meeting her major obligation to appoint qualified candidates who represent the people of Alabama to positions on various boards and commissions. Reagan worked directly under the Director of Appointments and Deputy Chief of Staff Nathan Lindsay. During her internship Reagan was responsible for drafting and finalizing



appointment letters, setting up interviews, being the direct contact for selected candidates for the various vacant Governor appointments. Reagan was also afforded the opportunity to participate in judicial, commission, state board, and other in-person candidate interviews. During her internship, Reagan worked alongside many of Governor Ivey's other directors and staff, giving her a unique opportunity to observe the internal workings of the Executive Office.

We congratulate Reagan on being chosen for this competitive opportunity to serve among the highest levels of our state government and welcome the insight into these processes that her presentation will bring to our Committee.



Future Events

Following is the most current calendar of events for the Committee.

Keep these dates in mind when planning your individual and campaign calendars.

Colbert County Committee Events Calendar	
Date	Event
June 27, 2022	CCREC regular meeting
July 25, 2022	CCREC regular meeting
August 22, 2022	CCREC regular meeting
September 26, 2022	CCREC regular meeting
October 24, 2022	CCREC regular meeting
November 8, 2022	General Election
November 13, 2022	CCREC regular meeting (election of officers)
December 2022	No meeting in December
January 15, 2023	Governor's Inauguration New CCREC Officers installed
January 22, 2023	CCREC regular meeting

CCREC Special Events for 2022

Dates and information for special events will be announced here as they become available.

This year Constitution Day, recognized as September 17th, falls on a Saturday when both Auburn and Alabama are playing home games. To avoid conflicts with those games and the local games taking place on Friday, the planning committee has decided to schedule our annual Constitution Day dinner on Thursday, September 15th. The location is yet to be announced, but a good tradition has been started with having the lower cost, picnic-style dinner in a year when there is a general election (like we did in 2020 at the Railroad roundhouse in Tuscumbia). That

will be the theme for this year, and we welcome suggestions for keynote speakers.

CCREC Members and Officers Terms of Service

According to the CCREC by-laws, Article V, Officer Nomination and Election, the new officers who were elected in November will assume their responsibilities on the same day as the gubernatorial inauguration:

Elections of officers shall be held in November. Officers shall take office in January for a period of four years to coincide with the election of the governor.

According to the Alabama Constitution, Article V, paragraph 116:

*The governor...[shall hold office] for the term of four years from the **first Monday after the second Tuesday in January next succeeding their election**, and until their successors shall be elected and qualified.*

So, the Alabama gubernatorial inauguration will take place on Monday, January 15, 2023, and a new (or perhaps reelected) chairman, secretary, and treasurer of the CCREC will assume office.