Earl Demands Ouster of Kasich Crony Amid Allegations of Corruption

Libertarian Party of Ohio gubernatorial candidate Charlie Earl continues to be involved in a monumental legal struggle to be restored to the ballot for November's elections. He is now calling on Governor John Kasich to dismiss Terry Casey, Chair of the State Personnel Board of Review who also worked on Governor Kasich's 2010 campaign, amid allegations that Casey is the individual funding the assault on his candidacy.

The original case arose after petitions on behalf of Earl and Sherry Clark for governor and lieutenant governor, respectively, and Steven Linnabary for attorney general, were submitted and local boards of election determined that a sufficient number were valid, placing the LPO candidates on the May primary ballot. Gregory Felsoci of Akron, a member of the LPO, then filed a protest which claimed that a number of the petitions were invalid because paid petitioners who collected the signatures did not disclose on the petition the name and address of the entity that paid them in the “employer identification box.” The LPO's contention was that this was unnecessary as the signature collectors were independent contractors, not employees of the party.

Felsoci was approached by Republican operatives. The law firm Zeiger, Tigges & Little contacted him and has represented him in making the protest. Felsoci, who a court document refers to as a “guileless dupe,” has said he was not paying the firm and did not know who was, but since then, it has come to light that Casey, a government employee who earns $66,000 per year and has little additional income, has agreed to pay the fees, which now top $100,000. He said he intends to solicit fellow Republicans for contributions to cover these costs.

Earl, Linnabary, and the LPO are asking Federal Judge Michael Watson to restore Earl and Linnabary to the ballot on the grounds that their removal was for partisan, as opposed to principled, reasons. The United States Constitution does not allow government officials to remove candidates from ballots for political reasons.

When asked to comment, Earl replied, “By his actions, Casey has demonstrated that he is unfit to serve as Chair of the State Personnel Board of Review. Like many political 'bag men' and 'fixers,' he lacks the ethical compass to serve the people of Ohio. If Casey possesses a scintilla of ethical probity, he would resign and apologize to the people of Ohio for colluding to limit their voices and choices in Ohio's electoral process. Since he won't, we therefore call on Governor Kasich to dismiss Casey from the SPBoR and restore some measure of confidence in state government. We trust the Court will restore the LPO's rightful place on the November ballot to give the citizens of Ohio a choice and a voice this election"

The LPO, with its co-plaintiffs, has filed a motion to expedite trial. The accompanying memorandum of support alleges, among other things, that the Secretary of State's office informed the LPO of the petition challenges when it was too late for Earl, his running mate Sherry Clark, and Libertarian candidate for Attorney General Steven Linnabary to run as write-in candidates as a matter of contingency.

A conflict of interest is also asserted in the Secretary of State's selection of Professor Bradley A. Smith as hearing officer. Professor Smith was also representing GOP Attorney General Mike DeWine in separate election law case before the United States Supreme Court at the time. Smith, who was paid nearly $20,000 for serving as Husted’s special hearing officer, initially submitted a ruling that would have left Earl and Linnabary on the ballot, but swiftly changed his ruling after communications with officials in Husted’s office.

Earl added, “Stay tuned. We may not have heard the end of this yet. There may be more bugs hiding in the woodwork.” Discovery in the case continues, with Husted scheduled to be deposed by Libertarian counsel Thursday.

Linnabary responded, "Running for office should not involve lawyers and the courts, but we live in Ohio where that is precisely what opposition candidates must do."

Thanks to the successful write-in campaign in the LP primary, Ohio voters will also see two other Libertarian’s on the November ballot for statewide office. Bob Bridges, Political Director for the LPO is running for Ohio Auditor. Kevin Knedler, Chair of the LPO Executive Committee, is running for office of Ohio Secretary of State.

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