

A NEW ERA OF ETHICS

In addition to losing credibility as the reliable representatives of conservative principles, we Republicans are increasingly seen as challenged on issues of ethics and morality.

Congressman Duke Cunningham wasn't alone in 2005 in finding himself under a serious ethical cloud. Of the 30 incumbent Republicans who lost reelection to the U.S. House in 2006, 9 lost in large part because they were under investigation for wrongdoing, under indictment or in some other way suffered serious ethical lapses. We lost another half dozen or more seats because of voter anger over ethics.

Since then, at least two Republican members of the U.S. Senate and one Republican member of the House have been forced from office.

The conduct of our leaders should always be beyond reproach. As Party Chairman, I will stand up against those who abuse their public trust. I will assure the RNC leads by example.

CREATE AN ETHICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

I will create an Ethical Review Committee made up entirely of RNC members whose task it will be to review and approve our ethical code and the RNC operations and contract processes to assure they meet the highest ethical standard. Under my leadership, the staff and consultants of the RNC will abide by an ethical code that includes the following rules.

- No Republican incumbent will receive Party resources who has been convicted of felony charges.
- Unless a consultant has engaged in clearly unethical, illegal, or egregiously unprofessional behavior, the Republican National Committee will not attempt to tell a state party which consultants or vendors they should or should not use.
- No RNC staff member will be allowed outside consulting contracts unless pre-approved by the ethical review committee.
- No member of the RNC staff will benefit financially from the RNC beyond their salary.
- The RNC will utilize a RFP process that mirrors best practices among national non-profit organizations. Contracts will be awarded strictly on merit.
- Financial terms of every contract will be judged according to a standard of fair practice so that charges to the RNC will not exceed the industry standard for the same services.

FORCING STATE PARTIES TO USE PREFERRED VENDORS IS WRONG

The Republican National Committee should avoid even the appearance of ethical conflict. But too often, state parties have been intimidated or threatened with the loss of national funds if they refused to use preferred vendors.

Forcing State Parties to use “favored” vendors is wrong. It diminishes our ethical standing, threatens our credibility with donors, injures the talented professionals who are doing good work, and harms our ability to win.

CHANGING THE EMPHASIS

We need a strong cadre of professional consultants. Talent is a resource as important to our campaigns as volunteers or money. The best consultants help assure their clients’ campaigns are creative, powerful and efficient.

Nevertheless, severe problems result when we place emphasis on things like polling and advertising to the exclusion of other important components of a winning campaign — registration, volunteers, get-out-the-vote and coalition building.

Winning campaigns — and a winning Republican National Committee — must respect every aspect of the campaign effort. Sure, television advertising is key, but so is a strong precinct organization that carries the campaign’s message by the most credible means possible — personally, friend to friend and neighbor to neighbor.

As Chairman, our new Republican National Committee will show that concern for every tactical means available to a campaign in our candidate training, field operations, staffing decisions, and budgeting.