

Statement from Tom Luna

As Chairman of the Idaho Republican Party, I had a number of conversations with leaders and members of the Bonneville County Republican Central Committee leading up to the May 17th primary election. These conversations were primarily about the activities of the county to “endorse” candidates in contested Republican primaries and making financial contributions to federal candidates. I made it clear that it was questionable whether party by-laws allowed counties to engage in contested primaries. I also made it clear that the “endorsement” flyer they were distributing was not only misleading but possibly broke federal election laws. These possible campaign finance violations not only put the Bonneville Central Committee at legal and financial risk but also put the state party at legal and financial risk.

I told them that as chairman I was obligated to protect the party, however, our conversations were not getting us closer to a resolution. Then, just days before the election, I was made aware that 1000’s of the misleading and potentially illegal flyers were going to be distributed door to door and mailed to voters the weekend before the election.

During this time, I talked with Doyle Beck a few times, the last time was on May 10th. I continued to insist that the county stop distributing the flyer because I was convinced they were putting the state party at risk. On one call with Doyle, he said something like “what are you going to do, sue us and throw us in jail?”

It soon became obvious to me that we were not going to come to an agreement to stop the distribution of the “endorsement” flyers. I figured I had two choices, do nothing and put the state party at risk or act to protect the party. As party chair it was clear to me that I must act, anything less would be a dereliction of my duties. So as a last resort, on May 12th the State Party filed a lawsuit to stop the Bonneville central committee from distributing the flyers in question. The judge agreed with our claim and granted our request for a temporary injunction to stop the distribution of the flyers.