Yes, the System is Rigged
(and No, I Don't Like Rubbery Chicken)

At ThePostEmail.com, Ted Cruz supporter Oscar Y. Harward—whose name sounds like a villain in an Ayn Rand novel—claims, "The GOP election of Delegates and Alternates in the Plan of Organization process leading to the GOP nomination of a POTUS is as normal, open, free, and healthy as the voting process on election days." The capitalization-and-italics-happy Harward writes, "*At the Precinct*, based on the Republican Party's Plan of Organization, 'ANY' registered Republican in their [sic; his or her] own precinct, or equivalent, can/may attend and participate in their [sic] own Republican Party voting precinct, or equivalent, and offer themselves [sic] or be nominated and elected to become a Delegate or Alternate to their [sic] own County's Convention as the numbers permitted by the Republican Party Plan of Organization."

He continues, "*At the County Convention*, the earlier elected Delegates or Alternates to the County Convention may or will, among other actions: Choose to offer himself/herself or to be nominated to become and elected as a Delegate or Alternate to the individual(s) Congressional District Convention as the numbers permitted by the Republican Party Plan of Organization." Harward then describes the actions taken "*At the Congressional District Convention*," "*At the State Convention*," and "*At the Republican National Committee (RNC) National* Convention."

From Harward's point of view, if you want a voice in the Republican Party nominating process, all you have to do is spend time at your local precinct, introduce yourself to everyone, spend months or years developing friendships, and then "offer yourself" to be nominated as a delegate at the county convention! Oh, and then suck up to people and try to get chosen at the congressional district convention… and don't forget to repeat that process at the state convention! *If* you make it through all those hurdles—and if you can afford the time and money to attend the national convention—you can then vote for the candidate of your choice, if the process goes to multiple ballots.

Harward pretentiously declares, "America, it is just this simple," and warns the millions of Trump supporters to "stop attacking, directing, and leading others to confuse by fabrications…" Apparently it is a fabrication for a resident of Colorado or Wyoming to say, "*But I didn't get to vote!*" Well, you *would* have gotten to vote—according to Harward—if you had only followed the rules. But in many states the rules are certainly not as simple as: "Show up at your polling place and cast a ballot." No, that would be far too reasonable.

What people like Harward are either unable or unwilling to comprehend is that the average citizen simply wants to cast a ballot in a primary election. That average citizen knows how to read, learn about the views of the candidates, discuss the issues with friends and relatives, and make an informed decision in a voting booth. But not everyone has the time, energy, or income to be able to do everything Harward outlines. The rules (especially in Colorado and Wyoming) make it clear that the system is rigged in favor of those who do have excess amounts of that time, energy, and income.

Frankly, I do not want to spend hours developing relationships with party regulars at the precinct level. I do not want to eat rubbery chicken at boring GOP dinners while listening to people like

Oscar Y. Harward lecture me about what my values should be and why Ted Cruz is the greatest Cuban-Canadian evangelist ever to set foot on U.S. soil. I do not want to drive hundreds of miles to attend county, congressional, and state conventions and pay for hotel stays and restaurant meals. I do not want to spend my evenings and weekends knocking on doors to introduce myself to strangers and ask that they support me as a delegate. I just want to cast a ballot in a primary and in November.

Some (perhaps many) in the Republican Party establishment would argue that what I want does not matter if I am not willing to invest time, energy, and money in support of my candidate. It is apparently not enough for me to wait in line an hour at a local school gymnasium in order to vote in a primary. If I live in Wyoming, I instead have to compete against 580,000 other residents to win one of the 475 delegate spots at the state convention—which may be a three- or four-hour drive away. In Wyoming, 475 people had the chance to vote for the delegate (not even the candidate) of their choice at the state convention. To the other 579,525 citizens who were too busy earning a living and unable to drive to Casper, the establishment says, "Too bad. The rules are the rules."

Perhaps Harward can next convince us that the West Virginia process is fair and simple. That state's Republican ballot is a six-page form. According to Politico.com, "More than 220 people are running for 22 statewide slots as convention delegates. On the ballot, they're divided based on the candidates they support and then listed alphabetically. …Voters wishing to select a full slate of Trump delegates can choose up to 22 of them—though if they inadvertently select 23 or more, all of their choices are thrown out." But the voters "must also be aware of a new rule to prohibit more than two delegates from residing in a single county—and seven from a single Congressional district—a stipulation that isn't mentioned on the ballot. Yet nine of the first 22 names on Trump's list are from populous Kanawha County, where Charleston, the state capital, is located. And if Trump voters pick them all, seven would be automatically disqualified and replaced by delegates who fit the criteria." Hey Oscar, how is it fair to have a critical new rule that is not explained on the ballot? ("You can vote for 22 delegates, but no more than two can be from the same county and no more than seven can be from the same congressional district—and we're not going to tell you where they live or that the rule even exists." To many, that sounds like a rule devised by Joseph Stalin or Hugo Chavez, not an American political party.)

Although Trump will almost certainly win the West Virginia primary by a wide margin, he may suffer in the delegate count—because few of the state's voters, faced with a list of names they probably never heard of, will know which county they are from. Trump could even win 100 percent of the vote, and Cruz and Kasich could still pick up some delegates. We should ask Harward to justify a rule that requires voters to know where each of 220 candidates live. ("West Virginia, it is just this simple!")

The system is *clearly* rigged in favor of the establishment, because it is the establishment that came up with the rules and which has the money and organization to make sure that its favored candidates know those rules. The establishment can, for example, print tens of thousands of voter guides that make it clear which combinations of delegates will not run afoul of the West Virginia residency rules. That the rules may have been finalized before the state primaries, caucuses, and conventions does not mean many of them are not unfair and unreasonable. Everyone knew in

advance that Hillary Clinton would benefit from the Democrat Party's absurd "superdelegate" policy, but that does not make it fair to Democrat voters. That the superdelegates are "in the rules" does not make the process fair to Bernie Sanders or his supporters.

The simple truth is that "one citizen, one vote" is a concept both political party establishments hate and fear because it can lead to outsiders gaining the power that has been monopolized for decades by the party insiders. Yes, the Republican Party rules are more democratic than those of the Democrat Party, and they are more democratic than they were decades ago, but the system is still terrible and not what one could call purely democratic. Yes, Donald Trump may win the nomination despite the roadblocks placed in his way, but that does not mean those roadblocks are justified. A Trump victory will only result in the party elites working to place even more roadblocks in the way of future "upstarts" like Trump and Ron Paul—candidates who dared to defy the party bosses.

What we should do is scrap the entire candidate nominating process. What we need—for both major political parties—is four or five months of campaigning and televised debates, followed by a national primary in early June. The winner of the national primary becomes the party's nominee. If no candidate wins at least 50 percent of the vote, then the top two vote-getters have six weeks to campaign before they face each other in a run-off election in late July. The winner is the nominee. There would be no delegates; no "superdelegates"; no county, district, or state conventions; no national conventions with funny hats, confetti, and balloons; and no tens of millions of dollars wasted on such nonsense. Of course, such a proposal means people like Reince Priebus, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, and Karl Rove would lose their jobs. Too bad.

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