

November 11, 2024

RE: Rules Review Committee re:
Saline County Republican Committee Executive Committee Members filed
September 9, 2024 by Clint Lancaster

Dear Chairman Wood,

You requested that a rules review be initiated on a complaint filed by Clint Lancaster. The committee voted 4-0 (Diana Harton, Bilenda Harris-Ritter, Steve Smith and Sharon Wright) and requested Jennifer Lancaster recuse from the committee and its chairmanship because she is inextricably intertwined in the events that led to the complaint being filed and is the wife and law partner of the person filing the complaint. She refused.

Because there was no hearing, by choice of the committee members, the deadline to submit a report was November 7, 2024. On that date Bilenda Harris-Ritter submitted a report of her opinion. Sharon Wright and Diana Harton join that opinion and report as indicative of the position of the committee.

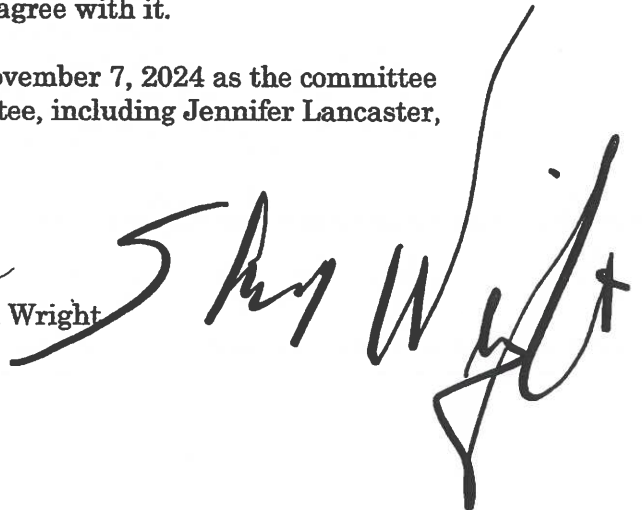
On November 7, Clint Lancaster asked to withdraw his complaint. At that point, Mr. Chair, you requested that the committee vote on whether to allow the complaint to be withdrawn. Diana Harton, Bilenda Harris-Ritter and Sharon Wright voted that the complaint should not be withdrawn. Steve Smith voted to allow it to be withdrawn and Jennifer Lancaster could not vote because there was no tie.

At 10 pm on Saturday November 9, Jennifer Lancaster emailed her report. This was not reviewed by the committee members ahead of time and we, Diana Harton, Bilenda Harris-Ritter and Sharon Wright object to it being considered. We were not given the opportunity to review it and we do not agree with it.

We request that you accept the report filed on November 7, 2024 as the committee report. It was sent to all members of the committee, including Jennifer Lancaster, and it was timely filed.

Sincerely,

Bilenda Harris-Ritter Diana Harton
Bilenda Harris-Ritter, Diana Harton and Sharon Wright

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Wright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long vertical line extending upwards from the top of the name.

**RULES REVIEW
REPORT TO RPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
RE: Complaint filed by Clint Lancaster against
Eight (8) members of the
Saline County Republican Committee Executive Committee
Prepared by Bilenda Harris-Ritter, RPA Rules Chair**

FOREWORD

On September 09, 2024, a Complaint was received, by RPA Chair Joseph Wood, regarding the actions and activities of eight (8) members of the Saline County Republican Committee (SCRC) Executive Committee. This complaint is in accordance with RPA Rules under Article VII, Section 1.

Per RPA Rules, Article VII, Section 1, paragraph B., the District Chair, District Representative, at least one member of the Executive Committee, Chair of the RPA Rules Committee, one County Chair from outside the District and an RPA staff member shall comprise the Rules Review Committee. Those members are Jennifer Lancaster, Steve Smith, Sharon Wright, myself as Rules Chair, and Diana Harton. Lexi Bramer is the assigned staff member.

Although three Zoom sessions were held (September 28, October 3 and October 19), I was not a part of the final one and did not participate in voting on the recommendations submitted by Ms. Lancaster. I submitted my opinion on recommendations to all committee members prior to the last Zoom meeting but the notes of the meeting indicate my recommendations were not addressed.

Members of the Committee requested additional information which Ms. Lancaster did not procure or provide. This included minutes of the SCRC meetings from January 23 to present. When asked about it a third time she produced minutes from this past summer.

Included with these Findings and Recommendations are exhibits provided by both parties and labeled accordingly. Additional exhibits are those I have provided from Facebook re: Ms. Lancaster's bias and a copy of the last Defendant's exhibit from page 65 of their submission. It is a statement from Charlotte Zuber who was recruited to join the SCRC by Ms. Lancaster.

The complaint was filed by Clint Lancaster, a member of the SCRC, on behalf of members of the SCRC. He is the husband and law partner of Jennifer Lancaster.

The complaint sets forth allegations of RPA rules violations against eight (8) people. Those people are:

1. John Newcomb
2. Frank Curtis
3. Scott Gray

4. Allison Gray
5. Angela Gray
6. Rene Allmond
7. Thomas Harper*
8. Stephanie Johnson

The rules they allegedly violated are
RPA Rules

Article II § 1(A)(B)(D)

Article II § 3(B)(3)

Article II § 6(A) (as to Frank Curtis only)

Article II § 6(B) (as to Angela Gray only)

Article II § 6(D) (as to Rene Allmond only)

Article II § 6(E) (as to Thomas Harper only) *

*Mr. Harper has resigned from the SCRC so no recommendation will be made regarding the allegations against him.

Proposed Sanctions

Sanctions requested by Mr. Lancaster:

- A. Removal of these people from the SCRC;
- B. Removal of these people from county committee leadership positions;
- C. Removal of these people from all district committee positions;
- D. Removal of these people from all state committee positions;
- E. Ban these people from holding any positions, leadership or otherwise, in the Party for a period of twenty (20) years;
- F. Ban these individuals from membership to this, or any other county committee for a period of ten (10) years;
- G. Direct and order that the newly formed leadership of the county committee bring a motion to the body to consider issuing a public apology for the actions of the committee.

Allegations:

1. John Newcomb is accused of violating Article I §8 Parliamentary Procedures. Article I § 8 does not address the actions Mr. Newcomb is alleged to have made. It states that if the RPA Rules do not cover something Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (current edition) will apply.

The other allegations indicate Newcomb is alleged to have been unruly and disruptive at meetings to advance his personal agenda. It is alleged his actions disrupting meetings of the SCRC and Hot Spring County Committees show an intent to work against the interests of the party.

2. Frank Curtis is the Chair of the SCRC He is alleged to have failed to take leadership actions to stop the actions of the other alleged offenders. He is alleged to have participated in secret executive committee meetings, encouraged Newcomb's outbursts being divisive with the local Young Republicans and making derogatory comments about elected county officials to the entire body. He is alleged to have failed to attend and lead meetings. A special meeting was called for August 26, 2024 and Curtis did not attend but instead declared the meeting canceled. It is alleged this is a direct violation of Party rules.

3. Scott Gray is alleged to be the unofficial mastermind of actions that alienated members, caused division, called secret executive meetings, and created websites that spread falsehoods and disparaged committee members.

It is alleged that, "In 2022 Gray yelled and screamed at Senator Kim Hammer, berated him, and made outlandish demands in front of the entire body at a committee meeting..." A clip of this interaction was provided as evidence.

It is further alleged that Scott Gray's actions have reflected poorly on the county committee, stifled participation, chilled membership and actively worked against the party to further his personal agenda.

4. Allison Gray is alleged to have actively solicited older, more vulnerable members of the committee to file false ethics complaints against Republican officials. She is also alleged to have physically assaulted another committee member who is the president of the Saline County Republican Women (SCRW).

5. Angela Gray is alleged to have failed to have attended meetings and failed to lead meetings as the second vice chair when Frank Curtis failed to appear.

6. Rene Allmond is the Secretary of SCRC and is alleged to have failed to attend meetings and failed to accurately keep records of attendance. She is also alleged to have solicited an older, vulnerable member of the committee to file false ethics complaints.

7. Mr. Harper has resigned. Because of his resignation his actions will not be addressed.

8. Stephanie Johnson is a Republican Saline County Justice of the Peace-Elect. She is alleged to have engaged in the "same conduct as the Gray's and Ms. Allmond. In addition, she has filed false police reports alleging county committee members attempted to bribe her when they "...offered to help her get desperately needed mental health treatment."

FINDINGS

After reviewing the Complaint and the Evidence it is my opinion there is a lot of generalized hyperbole in the description of the actions by specific members of the SCRC.

There is evidence provided by those named in the complaint that counters the allegations but certainly does not clear the named defendants from participation in divisive behavior.

The only clear rules violations are violations of Article II Section 9. 2 and 9.3, "willful violation of these rules or working against the interest of the Republican Party," and Inactivity, neglect or refusal to perform the duties of the office." It is apparent from the evidence that there are factions in the SCRC committee that cannot work together at all. The name calling and finger pointing has reached a point where business cannot be conducted. A segment of the committee called special meetings and the committee split into factions with business not able to be conducted in one regular meeting due to a fist fight occurring.

The group attempting to conduct business in special meetings was also divisive. A recording of the September 19, 2024 special meeting is in evidence and members are heard to say they voted not to attend the October SCRC meeting. This appears to be an effort to keep business from being conducted.

Further, on October 3, 2024, the members of the Rules Review Committee voted to request that Jennifer Lancaster recuse herself from chairing the Rules Review Committee. This was because her husband and law partner filed the complaint and the evidence shows she is inextricably intertwined in the actions and activities that are disrupting the SCRC and are the basis of the complaint. She refused.

Several days following that Zoom meeting, she posted on social media that, "There is a small group in the Saline County Republican Committee, specifically members of the executive committee, that have caused a great deal of chaos and division in our committee, and throughout the state. This group makes up less than 10% of our county committee so they went outside our committee to gather support and turn people against those of us trying to address the behavior." (Posted on or about October 11, 2024) RR Exhibit from BH-R attached.

Her comment was followed by a post from Codie Crumpton (a SCRC member) who stated in pertinent part, "...I can't help but wonder why things changed so quickly and drastically. A small group has inexplicably splintered off and aligned themselves with the RPA and Governor against the Christian, America First majority within our county committee. I don't want to believe that this tiny, fringe group would work with the establishment to bring down the will of the people and the State Convention lawsuit, but it sure is starting to look that way more and more every day. I believe Saline County is the largest (and most conservative) county committee in the state, and the majority of us stand with Jennifer Morganne Lancaster" (Reply to a Post by Jimmie Cavin on Facebook on or about October 11, 2024. (Copy attached)

These posts show clearly that the division in the SCRC is not caused by one side, that Jennifer Lancaster should have recused from chairing the Rules Review Committee because she is biased against the defendants, and that this is further evidence of the need for the SCRC to be declared vacant.

RECOMMENDATION

It is my recommendation that the SCRC be declared vacant as provided for in Article VII Section 1 F. Further, I recommend the vacancy be in effect for the period of time from the date of the Executive Committee Vote to the 2026 filing period. This allows time for reflection and reorganization. Although less than the 20 years requested in the Complaint it is still a significant sanction. It allows time for the vitriol among the members of the SCRC to dissipate before reconstituting the SCRC Committee.

Respectfully,

Bilenda Harris-Ritter

Bilenda Harris-Ritter

Rules Review Chair

Rules Review Committee re: Complaint against Eight (8) SCRC Executive Committee members

Attachments

1. Copy of Complaint
2. Exhibit List of Clint Lancaster
3. Exhibit List of SCRC Ex Com Defendants
4. Exhibit of Examples of Bias by Jennifer Lancaster