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## A VOTE FOR PROPOSITION 131 WILL KILL SELF-GOVERNANCE IN COLORADO

by Peg Cage

### **An informed rebuttal to paid consultant Dick Wadhams's pro-131 misinformation article claiming that it protects voters from election "disenfranchisement," and a plea for Coloradans to vote NO on Proposition 131.**

Dick Wadhams claims the Colorado Republican Party is about to destroy itself and that only the passage of Proposition 131 will save it. Newsflash: After decades of "leadership" from chairmen like him, the state Republican Party is in its death throes, and his article makes him look like the anxious undertaker gnawing on the nails for the coffin. In fact, the party can only be saved if voters *don't fall* for his 131, which creates Jungle Primaries AND Ranked-Choice-Voting general elections.

As a former state chairman of the Colorado Republican Party, Wadhams should know that the main purpose of the Party is to direct members to start at caucus and elect Republicans to office to create a government in the image of the party platform.

"We need to kill this thing . . . ." said Dick Wadhams in 2017 about a movement within the party to "opt out" of the first government-run primary elections that would be forcibly infiltrated by individuals who are unwilling to affiliate with the party. Why would Wadhams, along with other former chairmen Jeff Hays and U.S. Rep. Ken Buck, and former Secretary of State Wayne Williams, want to "kill" the efforts to salvage the party from outside interloper Kent Thiry's first attack? Why would former GOP chairmen oppose the opportunity to "cancel" out of the state's uncertifiable primary election and conduct an intraparty delegating/nominating process whose aim is to advance good candidates onto the general election ballot?

Wealthy entrepreneur Kent Thiry and Unite America's Propositions 107 and 108 that passed in 2016:

- Added enormous cost to taxpayers by adding a presidential primary election.
- Set the stage to eliminate the Electoral College by instituting a meaningless popular vote.
- Decreased party participation by holding a presidential primary prior to precinct caucuses.
- Created a "semi-open primary election" and decreased the integrity of the party's platform by forcing non-party members into the party's primary elections.
- Added extra expense and confusion by sending unaffiliated voters unsolicited ballots for each major party.
- Decreased campaign volunteers' time by adding another month of partisan election work.
- Compelled lawsuits to challenge the law's constitutionality.
- Created an unconscionably high threshold for party members to opt out of state-run, force-infiltrated, semi-open primary elections.
- Divided the party between those who want to designate candidates to the general election ballot through an internal Republicans-only process and those, like Wadhams, who do not. (Wadhams is no longer a voting member of the Party.)

Incidentally, 2016 was also the year that Wayne Williams, as Secretary of State, encumbered the party's canvass board members' abilities to verify that ballots were cast by eligible electors when he redefined "ballots cast." And it was the year that the Colorado GOP, after the Dominion Voting Systems-counted State GOP Convention under Chairman Steve House, sent out a tweet that read, "We did it! Never Trump!"

As GOP Chairman, Jeff Hays proposed a "winner-take-all" primary, just like the one in 131. Again, why did the Republican Party chairman promote the destruction, rather than the integrity, of the party?

Ken Buck was asked by Senator Cory Gardner to run for GOP chairman against state Representative Susan Beckman. Beckman had a plan to re-invigorate the party by returning it to its principles and working towards election integrity. In that contest, Buck "won" by about eight votes and Beckman wrote a report about the questionable election that decided it. As a Congressman, Buck voted to certify Joe Biden's presidential win. As State Party Chairman, Buck called together the GOP State Central Committee with three county clerks to explain that, while other states may have had problems, Colorado has "the Gold Standard" of elections. In contrast, Beckman would have created a report, as she had done for all her races, and led the Colorado GOP to demand investigations to prove that our party's presidential candidate had won.

Buck recently quit the U.S. House because there is more power in controlling elections than serving in Congress. ("I just feel there is important work to be done concerning the election *and how we choose candidates*," Buck added. "So I want to get involved in this election cycle and make sure we choose the best candidate we can." [emphasis added])

Coloradans really need to vote NO on Proposition 131. The proponents want it badly and are going to extremes to get it, as witnessed by the constant propaganda aimed at trying to make people think it is a good thing. But Proposition 131 is just one in a series of initiatives brought by Kent Thiry, whose stated goal is to kill the parties. He says he will be back as 131 does not achieve all his goals; as a co-chair of Unite America, he has personally donated around \$2,500,000 to pass it. Unite America's aggregate donations were \$5,680,000, and maybe more.

Thiry has perverted the "Citizen's Initiative" process by bludgeoning the Secretary of State Title Board with high-priced lawyers and bombarding it with over 70 initiative proposals; he finally got a few of them through opponents' challenges in the Colorado Supreme Court. The integrity of the Title Board, whose job it is to title only single-subject initiatives, must now be in serious doubt (and the courts too!) for allowing this initiative with two distinct subjects to be titled. Proposition 131 not only fully changes the purpose and process of primary elections but also mandates for some general election races that a new method of vote-counting which is controversial, confusing, and costly be added to the already overburdened county taxpayers.

Unlike the *pro se* Good Initiatives that were created to counter Proposition 131 (Initiative 310, at the time), Thiry did not use teams of Colorado volunteers to gather signatures; instead, he paid six different signature-gathering entities, with payments from \$2.00 to \$35.00 being reported per

signature, for the necessary 125,000 good signatures. The Good Initiatives were quoted \$3,000,000 to gather enough signatures to get their three single-subject initiatives onto the general-election ballot. Since enough money was barely raised to repay the cost of printing petitions, paying to supplement the movement's great volunteers was not an option. Evidently, efforts aimed at subverting elections are more lucrative than those aimed at protecting them.

Wadhams has said, "It is instructive that the leadership of political parties strongly oppose Proposition 131. Colorado Democratic state chairman Shad Murib is an ally of Dave Williams and criminally- convicted-and-sentenced Tina Peters in opposing Proposition 131." However, Murib and Williams are doing what Wadhams never did and protecting the integrity of the parties they are leading from Wadhams's and Thiry's efforts to kill them. Wadhams's statement about Tina Peters is out of line unless one recalls that this is *all* about elections, after all, and Peters is serving prison time at the behest of a vindictive, nasty judge after a trial where she was disallowed from presenting substantive evidence in her defense. She is now the show-trial victim, the political prisoner who is an example of what will happen to anyone who raises questions about the integrity and transparency of Colorado's elections.

Proponents of Proposition 131 say it protects our democracy and "is based on the principles that every voter should be able to vote in every taxpayer-paid-for election for any candidate in an open-primary election *and* that the winner of ranked-choice voting in the general election must win with a majority of votes." (Notice the "and", which should not be in a single subject bill.) Proposition 131 was deviously conceived and brought forward by rich, power-hungry people who are currently investing in deceiving the masses into (i) giving up their rights to choose their representatives in government and (ii) instituting harmful laws that enable those unscrupulous people to buy any office they desire. In effect, they want to kill our time-honored republican method of ensuring lawful, popular self-governance.

As Americans, we are guaranteed a "republican form of government" via a clause included in our U.S. Constitution to prevent states from establishing monarchical or despotic governments. (Art. IV, Sec. 4) Proposition 131 would help to establish just such an odious form of government and so must be soundly rejected. For those who have already voted for it, please now take two people to the polls to vote against it – one to cancel your vote and one to add to the NO votes. Please rectify your mistake in this way if you prize your continuing rights and freedoms in our state.

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