

The Democrat state party chairman is supporting a Republican for governor?

Talk about a guy with shallow principles.

How the Democrats could have chosen such a guy as their state chairman is beyond me. And now probably beyond them.

There are huge philosophical differences between a Democrat and a Republican. Far too great for one who proclaimed he believed enough in the Democrat's positions regarding fiscal, social and military issues to suddenly abandon ship and endorse a member of the other party for the important office of governor of the State of Wyoming.

But, that's exactly what Dr. John Millin of Cheyenne has done. He has announced he will register as a Republican so he can vote in the August 17th primary. He claims he will support Colin Simpson's candidacy. But is that the real reason for his conversion?

He didn't even have the decency to wait until the filing period window for candidates closed before he announced he was supporting Colin Simpson. What if a recognized Democrat like Jayne Mockler or Debbie Hammons announces she would run for governor with Democratic Party backing? Would Millin then withdraw his support for a Republican and come back to the Party he said he cherished when he asked for votes to become Party Chairman? Or, did he deceive members of the Democratic Party in the past just so he could add a line to his resume?

Millin has tried to explain his abandonment of a political party in trouble by pretending that he and other like-minded traitors will have a "say" by voting for a member of the political party they long claimed to despise. And John performs surgery that helps people see?

There may be a different motivation for Millin's betrayal. Obviously, he and a handful of other Democrats won't affect the governor's race. And, if Republican opponents remind Republican voters that Colin Simpson is relying on the votes of Democrats to try to propel him to victory, it certainly won't help young Simpson.

John Millin has been around politics long enough - not a long time but since he ran for Cheyenne City Council in 2000 and lost - to know that he has no following and his appeal to other Democrats to switch parties for the Primary Election is almost certain to fall on deaf ears. The only Democrat to win statewide office while John was party chair was Dave Freudenthal and Millin played no role in that success. Democratic candidates statewide, hardly listening to someone from Cheyenne for guidance, have made virtually no inroads into the stranglehold Republicans have on state offices. The GOP has a veto proof majority in both houses of the Wyoming State Legislature and Millin did not change that during his

stewardship of the state Democratic Party.

It is a common ploy in "no-crossover" states that members of one party will register in the other for the Primary Election so they can try to help a weaker candidate win so their true candidate (of their real political party) will have a better chance to defeat that weak candidate in the upcoming general election. That scenario depends on the candidate of their own party having no serious competition, of course.

But, to say you're re-registering to the other party for the primary election so you can vote for a member of the opposing party to have an influence on that outcome is bizarre and unprecedented.

Assuming that John Millin truly believes he can get many Democratic voters to join him, chances are it is not to help Colin Simpson prevail in the Republican primary for governor because the Democrats have no credible announced candidate in opposition at this point.

So, how could such a move, if successful, make sense? How could the move away from the Democratic Party help elect a Democrat in the general election?

In the race for State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

That is the smell in the air. That most likely is the real purpose of a bunch of Democrats registering as Republicans to vote in the Republican primary on August 17th. Because, you see, there is a viable Democrat candidate in the race for State Superintendent of Schools - Mike Massie. And, Mike has been a real party insider and could have schemed with John Millin to try to pull off such a stunt. This maneuver squares with the normal "vote on the other side in the primary" stunt used previously elsewhere.

By crossing over, and even ignoring the governor's race because Dems don't have a candidate to benefit regardless of who wins the Republican primary, and voting for the candidate this cabal deems is the "easiest prey" for Massie in November, they could have an impact on that election.

At this point, it would appear that the race for State Superintendent of Schools could be close. To help Massie, Millin's group could pick the weakest of the herd, say Jim McBride, and vote for him to benefit Massie in the general election. Because, if either Ted Adams or Cindy Hill wins the Republican primary, Massie has little chance to win in a statewide vote. Very little chance. But, if McBride is his opponent, with McBride's unpopularity among school administrators and other educators throughout the state, Massie might have a chance. So, this crossover for the primary may have a real purpose after all.

Primary candidates and term limits

Filings for local offices have been pretty slow. At the close of business Friday, May 21, there are offices with but one candidate. Some of the most important offices have no competition or a candidate either unknown or undeserving of re-election. Other offices will present an interesting choice. As usual, offices with no incumbents attract a larger field of candidates. Offices with an incumbent seldom attract electable challengers.

Before going further about specific candidates, I need to make clear a change in my position about term limits. In spite of 77% of Wyoming voters who voted in a referendum in 1992 to limit terms of office for federal and state officeholders, it has become clear that the vote was an insincere one and what most voters were really saying was, "your guy should be term limited but mine shouldn't." So, voters have not applied any penalty to those who break faith with voters and run for office after they should have been term limited. I know the Supreme Court ruled term limits were unconstitutional when imposed by statute, but they didn't say term limits were unconstitutional, per se.

I had defended the voters position since term limits would have started to apply in 2004. No more. And, I will no longer use my voice to try to apply term limits to offices unaffected by the vote in 1992. In other words, at the county and city levels. So, I may make fun of candidates who simply will not leave office other than on a gurney but if that's who voters continue to choose, so be it.

As of the close of business on Friday, May 21st, halfway through the filing period, only one person has filed for three of the county offices - coroner, assessor and district attorney. The first two makes some kind of sense because the jobs require skills or abilities unique to the job. But, there are more attorneys in Cheyenne than potholes and it seems like more than one would like a cushy job where they don't have to be a rainmaker or know much about the law to hold the position. Maybe there will be late filings for that office. If Scott Homar is the best Laramie County can do, that explains a lot about our problems here.

At this point, there are three and four candidates for the offices that will *not* have an incumbent seeking another term - clerk of the district court (4) and treasurer (3). Debbye Lathrop, three term county clerk, has a viable challenge from a guy who is also a county employee. Danny Glick has two challengers for the sheriff's position.

For county commissioner, there is but one Democrat who has filed, the seven term incumbent, and three on the Republican side, including the three term incumbent and Judy Case, who is a three term incumbent on the Cheyenne city council.

In the city council races, one member will be elected from each ward in this election. Ward 1 has a single candidate - a newcomer. Incumbents in Ward 2 and Ward 3 seek another term. The name of the candidate in Ward 1 is unfamiliar to me as is the challenger in Ward 3. That says nothing about their candidacy - just that I am unfamiliar with the guys.

The only federal office up for election is the U.S. House of Representatives and the Republican incumbent seeks re-election. There is a Republican challenger and one Democrat filed. With no incumbent running for Governor, the field is getting crowded with candidates. Four well-recognized Republicans have announced their intention to run even though Rita Meyer has not filed as of today. With Rita, there will be six Republican candidates seeking the office (James Macneil announced his candidacy in the Herald and that would make seven) and there are three less well-known Democrats running for Governor. The secretary of state and state treasurer, both running for a fourth term in state office, are running unopposed in their own party and secretary of state has one Democrat filed.

State Auditor has two Republicans seeking the office Rita Meyer is vacating. State Superintendent of Public Instruction has the Republican incumbent and two Republican challengers as well as a single Democrat filed to now. Laramie County legislative races have few contests at this time. Slaughterhouse Sue has filed for another term up north but has a Republican opponent in the primary.

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