

By Bev Harris

**BLACK BOX VOTING EXCLUSIVE**

You may be hearing lately that the problem with Iowa caucuses (reported the wrong result, "lost" results) and Nevada (more votes than voters, took stupidly long to count a one-race ballot) were due to "amateurs." But have you heard that Nevada and Iowa hired professionals to run the caucus?

You might just raise one eyebrow with that; you might just say, "Sheesh. Won't hire those guys again." But then comes conflict of interest. It turns out that at least three of the top guns listed below had been involved in the campaign of a single top candidate, and then went on to run the (botched, but beneficially so) caucuses.

"Two former Executive Directors of the Republican Party of Iowa, Gentry Collins and Jim Anderson, were hired by the Nevada GOP to oversee its 2012 caucus operations. The Nevada GOP contracted CAP Public Affairs, a firm led by Collins, Anderson, and Alan Philp, because Collins and Anderson had overseen the caucus process in Iowa," writes The Iowa Republican:

<http://theiowarepublican.com/2012/nevada%E2%80%99s-incompetence-makes-things-worse-for-iowa/>

"The state Republican party is going pro. Chair Amy Tarkanian has tapped ... Alan Philp and Gentry Collins (ex-RNC guys) on board. Plus Cory Drumright..." Writes the Nevada News Bureau.

<http://www.nevadanewsbureau.com/2011/09/02/in-case-you-missed-it-the-week-in-nevada-politics/>

"Pro" indeed. The problem is, all three of the above-mentioned "pros" have been part of the campaign of one of the contestants in their caucus. But if both your eyebrows aren't raised yet, take a look at this:

"Why do I consider Alan Philp as one of the dirtiest politicians in Colorado? ... Just look at his documented track record," a horrified blogger who tags himself "what goes around" wrote in 2008.

<http://www.coloradopols.com/diary/5731/>

At issue: As TV legal pundit Jeralyn Merritt described them, "Willie Horton-style" deceptive ads, which created an uproar against Alan Philp's Trailhead Group, and very nearly landed him in jail.

<http://www.5280.com/blogs/2006/09/24/willie-horton-ad-against-ritter>

"Trailhead may face criminal charges," warned reporter Jason Bane in the Colorado Independent.

<http://coloradoindependent.com/804/trailhead-director-may-face-criminal-charges>

But while everyone agreed the operative's ads were thoroughly odious, he was not arrested. "Alan Philp not going to the pokey," reads the headline, unfortunately with no further details.

<http://coloradolib.blogspot.com/2007/01/alan-philp-not-heady-to-pokey.html>

And then came the finances of Philp's Trailhead organization. Money was pouring in from elites like the Coors Family at \$50,000 a pop, and going out to other groups, who claim they never got it, according to documents published at Daily Kos:

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2006/09/15/246885/-EXCLUSIVE:-Colorado-GOP-527-Cooking-the-Books-or-Sloppy-Chefs->

A string of problematic financial transactions are alleged for organizations while Philp was in charge.

<http://coloradoindependent.com/639/updated-new-complaint-filed-against-trailhead-alleging-money-laundering>

"We made a mistake based on an errant reading of the state statutes, and we're taking steps to remedy the problem," said Alan Philp, executive director of the Colorado Republican Party." While Philp was its director, the Colorado Republican Committee failed to file notices of large contributions, as required by law, despite receiving 65 such contributions between Oct. 10 and 23.

<http://www.fishnette.net/creds/gopcash.htm>

But according to Philp's bio on his own Web site, he was "Regional Political Director for a nine-state region for the Republican National Committee." And he didn't know the rules?

<http://cappublicaffairs.com/>

"Oy vey. Here comes Alan Philp again," writes Cara DeGette of the Colorado Springs Independent. "Oh, yeah, oh yeah. The down 'n dirty, hardball Republican 527 committee that

two years ago tracked a bloody path of slash-'em politics all over the state? ...It was run by an operative named Alan Philp, who was flogged for broadcasts and campaign fliers" which were ... well... bald-faced lies.

<http://www.csindy.com/colorado/whos-running-the-show/Content?oid=1142486>

"I am excited to announce the addition of these seasoned and well respected political operatives to the Nevada Republican Party," enthused Amy Tarkanian, Chairman of the Nevada Republican Party, in a press release.

<http://www.nevadagop.org/nevada-republican-party-announces-big-additions-to-2012-team/>

"Cory Drumright will serve as the Nevada Republican Party Caucus Director overseeing the day to day operations for the 2012 Nevada Republican Presidential Caucus," she announced.

But here's the problem. Black Box Voting does not support or deride any candidate, but we do attack bad policy. And it's bad policy to have three guys in charge of a caucus, all of whom had recently worked for one of the candidates in the race.

When you add the apparently revolting ethics of Philp, along with the troubling Iowa caucus management of Collins, you've got a bad brew.

Because so many citizens, bloggers, and tweeters put these caucus problems out in the sunshine, two black eyes on the face of democracy showed up in public, albeit with a heavy coat of makeup applied by the media.

It appears that what really happened was anything but amateur, but The AP writes:

"There are no voting machine, no election monitors, and collecting the votes is a strange haphazard affair."

<http://www.theatlanticwire.com/national/2012/02/are-caucuses-undemocratic/48243/>

But there were monitors, and they are called "the public", and while the counting appeared to be haphazard, or crooked, the reason we know this is because of public watchfulness. Heck yes they'd like to insert voting machines. It's so much smoother when no one can actually see the counting.

Both Tarkanian, Chairman of the Nevada Republican Party, and Matt Strawn, Chairman of the Iowa Republican Party, have resigned.

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Government is the servant of the people, and not the master of them. The people, in delegating

authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. We insist on remaining informed so that we may retain control over the instruments of government we have created.

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