

Independent (Petition) Candidates Getting Ready to Fire Up in the 2018 Elections!!! Commissioner's and Sheriff's Office Races!! Report by Robert A. Williams

First, some explanation.

Elections in Cleveland County are usually:

1. Partisan or Political Party Affiliation required candidates. Usually only Democrat Party or Republican Party members are allowed to run as candidates under the Democrat or Republican Party names. Other Political Parties are the Libertarians, though a Libertarian candidate running for office is rare. These Political Parties have fulfilled certain preliminary work with the State Elections Board to register and run for elected office. Such preliminary work is costly and the Democrat, Republican and Libertarian Parties work together to ensure that their candidates can file to run easily and any candidate running without a Political Party affiliation has a much harder task of filing and running for that partisan elected office. If more candidates for a particular partisan elected office file to run than the number of offices available, then a Political Party Primary Election is held to reduce the number of candidates down to the actual number of elected offices that are up for election.

2. Non-Partisan Elections are typically for lessor offices such as Small Town Council members and mayors. Until 2017 the CCS School Board elections were non-partisan. In non-partisan races for an elected office all the candidates file, no matter

what political party they are affiliated with, then in the General Election the top "vote getters" fill the number of offices that are available.

Now, you have to remember that this is the United States of America and everybody, no matter what Political Party affiliation or NO political party affiliation, has the right to run for elected office. Also remember that the Political Parties (Democrats, Republicans and Libertarians) want their party candidates to win every office and do not care to make it easy for Unaffiliated Candidates to run for any partisan elected office. They also want all their candidates vetted through the Primary Election Process to screen out those candidates that do not follow the Party's Platform or will not vote like the party bosses want them to vote. It can even become a "buddy-system" where party affiliated candidates have to "suck up" to party officials to make it through the party primary election.

Therefore, considering all of the above, independent thinkers who do not want to suck-up to party dogma or party bosses, there has to be a way to run for elected office without having to go through the Political Party Primary election. This is usually much more difficult because the major parties, Democrat, Republican and Libertarian, have passed laws making it more difficult for Party independents or unaffiliated candidates to run for office.

In North Carolina there is such a way for independents and unaffiliated candidates to run for office. It is called the "Petition Process" which has two variations.

One variation is to gather a large, but predetermined numbers of signatures on a petition for that particular candidate to avoid the Party Primary Election process and have the candidate's name printed on the General Election Ballot. Having the candidate's name on the ballot alongside the Party Candidates is less confusing for voters, but the high level of

inconvenience in gathering large numbers of signatures requires such candidates to have to assemble a campaign team and work much harder than their Party Candidate opponents.

A second variation in the petition process is to run as a "Write-In Candidate." Usually the number of petition signatures are less and the filing time is later. This is more convenient for candidates who did not plan to run for an elected office so early to file in other ways, became interested in running for office later in the election cycle or for whatever reason. Running as a Write-In candidate is more convenient, but without having your name actually on the ballot and having the voters to actually "Write-In" your name means you have to work harder to educate the voters about you, your candidacy and what they have to do to actually vote for you.

In this 2018 General Election there will be one of each petition process candidates running for office as follows:

1. Willie Green is running as a write-in candidate for one of the four year terms as a Cleveland County Commissioner. Mr. Green's vast credentials will be provided and compared with his opponents in other articles. But one thing is certain. Mr. Green is running to best represent the interests of the citizens of Cleveland County and not to any Party Bosses or Political "machines."

2. Mr. Clyde Ledbetter is running as a petition candidate for the Sheriff of Cleveland County and Mr. Ledbetter's actual name will be on the General Election Ballot. Mr. Ledbetter's is also running for office to best represent and protect the citizens of Cleveland County and without having to promise any Political Party Bosses or Political machine anything. Mr. Ledbetter's vast credentials will also be compared with his opponent in other articles.

These two independent minded candidates, unencumbered by the

baggage of the present Democrat and Republican Party gridlock and divisive natures at about every level, are breaths of fresh air in Cleveland County Politics and Election discussions. The citizens and voters of Cleveland County will be all the better for the fresh views, open discussions and innovative solutions to problems that affect our citizens. Proof of this is obvious because of all the complaining by the party bosses. All the tall tales too.

Tune in and listen up!!! More campaign and election news is coming soon. Be prepared to hear the truth this election cycle.