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Republican Party Headquarters Update

For Immediate Release

April 10, 2023

As stated in the last Republican Party newsletter, the lease for our Headquarters at 310 Metcalf Street was terminated. This was a disappointing outcome that several elected officials and respected members of the community and I tried to fend off, but we were unsuccessful. The Party leased 308 Collins Street in 1965, and then moved to the larger 310 Collins Street (later named Metcalf) in 1994. No doubt this is a grievous loss for our community. For those who are asking how this has happened, I'll try my best to give you a succinct explanation.

In 2020, the landlord, Roney Poole, began expressing to past Chairman Dr. Wilkerson and I that he could rent the space for quite a bit more money. The rent was \$750 a month which included basic utilities. He was convinced he could get closer to \$2600. We settled on a deal where the Party would increase their monthly payment to \$1000 and also update the facilities. Additionally, we agreed that after 2022, we would work on getting new AC equipment and separate the electrical, because several tenants all shared the same electric bill.

Everything was going well. My wife, Linda Stuckey, and Susan Johnson raised over \$22k in donations for HQ renovations. Plans to update the electrical and AC were scheduled to commence after the 2022 midterm elections. The election was tough because we had to recruit over 1000 workers. Everyone did a great job! Afterward, my family went on a cruise in December for a welcome break. When I returned, I had several missed phone calls from the Landlord. He had spoken with Susan Johnson who is a realtor and a Precinct Chair who had helped negotiate the last lease agreement. Susan explained that Mr. Poole said he was visited by Charles Shirley, who claimed to be the Party Treasurer. He told Mr. Poole that I was no longer the Chairman, that I had no intention of paying future rent, and that I had planned to relocate HQ. He demanded that Mr. Poole give him the keys to the facility or else the Party would no longer pay Mr. Poole.

At my earliest opportunity, I spoke with Mr. Poole and assured him that I did not plan to move HQ, that I am still the Chairman, and that Mr. Shirley had no right to demand access. Mr. Shirley is not a member of the CEC, and is not the Party Treasurer because he was purportedly [appointed by a rogue group of Party members at a meeting where they unlawfully excluded fellow CEC members, including myself, from participating](#), in violation of the Texas Election Code. I'll refer to this group as the Freedom Caucus of the Party because that is what they call themselves.

I was able to assuage Mr. Poole's concerns by providing documentation from the Secretary of State showing that I was still the Chairman. I also reassured him that I had no intention of moving HQ. He again stated he could make more money if he got new tenants and that he would most likely be terminating the lease with the Party. Nevertheless, several options were proposed, including an offer to take the smaller space (the Party originally rented 308 Metcalf) so that Mr. Poole could increase rental revenue. Duke Coon and Judge Wayne Mack also met with Mr. Poole to help broker an agreeable arrangement.

Mr. Poole did not want to be further harassed by Shirley and was going to move forward with ending the lease with the Party. On December 28th, a termination letter was issued by Mr. Poole's attorney. Notwithstanding, Mr. Poole stated that he would start a new lease with the Office of the Chairman, on a month to month basis. I began paying the rent in January thanks to donations from the North Shore Republican Women and Judge Wayne Mack. I allowed the Party to continue to use the space and operate as usual.

The Freedom Caucus leadership team persisted in demanding access to the building. This continued despite our Technology Chair having explained the building's normal hours of operation and that it could be used to conduct Party business when it was open. It was also explained that if they had legitimate Party business after hours, they just needed to reserve the space with the HQ Chairman Dorothy Woodall and she would provide access. Nevertheless, they continued their harassment of Mr. Poole, continuing to send threatening demand letters to him:

If J&R Assets does not provide immediate access, there are penalties under Texas state law that apply. The relevant law is as follows: (g) If a landlord or a landlord's agent violates this section, the tenant may:

- (1) either recover possession of the premises or terminate the lease; and*
- (2) recover from the landlord an amount equal to the sum of the tenant's actual damages, one month's rent or \$500, whichever is greater, reasonable attorney's fees, and court costs, less any delinquent rents or other sums for which the tenant is liable to the landlord.*

We look forward to immediate access to the office property since our rent is fully paid. If we do not gain access to the office rental property, we will pursue every available legal avenue at our disposal.

[Read Full Letter Here](#)

Eventually, Mr. Poole had enough and told me we would have to move out. Yet again, I tried to find a mutually agreeable arrangement. Judge Wayne Mack also helped the Party once again, but got the following response:

"Mr. Poole told me he was spending more money on legal fees talking to his lawyer, dealing with these threats, than he was making on rent from Chairman Christ. He was no longer willing to negotiate".

As a result, Mr. Poole sent a termination letter for vacating the property at the end of March. I understood there was nothing more that could be done. I am sympathetic to the hostility he endured and appreciate his patience beyond measure. I want to thank Mr. Poole for his dedication to our cause for decades. He is a good friend to the Party, to past Chairman Dr. Wilkerson, and an extremely kind man.

Having already conveyed the circumstances to the Steering Committee, on March 7th, at a county executive committee meeting for the Party, I explained everything to the members. At this time, I believed it would be unwise to pursue a new space because of the continuing Party turmoil. There was no reason for another landlord to suffer the same mistreatment. As a result, the Party voted to allow me to donate, sell, or store the assets. Most of the items were returned to their original donors while others went to our Republican Party neighbors in Waller County.

Many have asked where we'll keep campaign material and where we will host Party activities. I am happy to announce that Republicans will still have a place to call home. I serve with others on the Montgomery County Republican Club. We collaborated with elected officials and many Republican Women officers and subsequently agreed on a rental space in Conroe. This will be a facility that all Republicans can use, and won't be leased by the Party. Moreover, it will be an anchor against the current infighting. We're going to work on a fundraiser for this Summer, but in the meantime we collectively raised enough money for the deposits, a few months of rent, and some renovations. It will be called the Montgomery County Republican Clubhouse. More on that space to be announced, but if you're interested in helping with this effort, please email mctxrepublicans@gmail.com.

I'm remaining optimistic, as Dr. Wilkerson always said we should do. Goodbyes are sad and saying farewell to 310 Metcalf has been extremely difficult. Many tears were shed as we walked away and closed those doors one last time. We know that God is in control and we've decided, as a leadership team, to move forward in the best way we know how... seeking guidance, working together with our Republican community, and staying positive.

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