

Ten Minute Summary

Mr. Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to state our case in response to this complaint.

The Rules of the Republican Party of Kentucky say plainly:

5 PRECINCT COMMITTEE: The Precinct shall be the **basic organizational unit** of the Republican Party of Kentucky and managed through the precinct committee.

The rules go on to explain that each precinct is led by 3 Precinct officers called precinct captains.

The rules also say in 4.01

The membership of each County Committee shall consist of the Precinct Officers and the County Officers

Each of us who are members of the Hardin County Republican Party, who voted to censure Mitch McConnell, are Precinct officers. We are the leaders of our respective precinct committees and the voting members of our County Committee. On this matter we are in the majority. We have voted twice, in the majority, to censure Mitch McConnell.

It is our right, as Americans, to express ourselves when we disapprove of what our elected Representatives have done in actions against our wishes. It is our right as Republicans, to condemn a Republican politician who acts against the platform of our party. And it is our right as members of our Republican County Party to censure a Republican when they conspire with Democrats to weaken our second amendment rights.

The job of a chair is simple and this definition was found on the internet:

A chair is the facilitator and **the servant** of the group. It is important to note that in large groups [such as our own] the chair does not make motions, debate them, or vote (except by ballot). Robert has special rules for small boards (up to about 12 people).

This is plain and simple, and the commonly understood role of the chair. The chair is a servant of the group. Even when or if a chair votes, it is ONLY one vote, like any of us.

By her conduct Cheryl Benitez has demonstrated that she is unfit to be the chair of the Hardin County Republican Party. Since July, when discussion of censuring Mitch McConnell began, Cheryl Benitez has acted as a partisan defendant of McConnell. Cheryl Benitez has been engaged in obstruction, has disseminated false instructions about the operation of the party, has lied to members of our committee and has not abided by the majority decision of the County Committee.

The most glaring example of her rebellion against the majority of her own county party is the December 5th complaint/appeal that she has made to you, the chair of our second District. In her complaint, Cheryl Benitez demands that the chair overturn the majority vote of our County Committee to express our formal disapproval of Mitch McConnell, who supported Red Flag laws by voting for the "Bipartisan Safer Communities Act". McConnell's action was in direct conflict with the platform of the Republican Party and it is indefensible. So say we, the majority of the Hardin County Republican Party.

Cheryl Benitez's response to this is to call the precinct captains of her County Committee "extremists". She wants to muzzle us. And **NOW**, she wants **YOU** to muzzle us. She has acted with malice and in anger toward us. There are three examples of the expression of that anger in the evidence that we have presented to you.

On one occasion, when attempting to deliver to her a document, she locked us out of the county office. We stood outside the door, she stood inside, and told us she would not let us in.

She ignored for months, a signed petition asking for a Special meeting of our County Committee. She actually had the audacity to call a Special Meeting for another purpose, subsequent to our petition for a Special meeting, and holding **HER** Special Meeting before the meeting that we asked for by petition. Her defense was simple, she is the chair, and she can do whatever she wants.

Most recently, in the November 29th meeting where we ratified the censure taken in August, Cheryl Benitez declared that she was resigning as the chair and stormed out of the room in the midst of a meeting. Why? Because she was angry. She had not behaved in that meeting as the chair of our group, she acted as a partisan in the debate and acted to thwart the majority through procedural tricks. When the majority finally voted to ratify our censure she stormed out declaring her resignation.

Once again, you could count as the fourth example of her malice and anger, this complaint/appeal which she has made to you.

It is our view that Cheryl Benitez is unfit to be the chair of our County Committee. If we had it to do over, she would not have been elected chair of our committee. We think her conduct amounts to malfeasance and she should be removed from office. We do NOT accept her decision to withdraw the resignation of November 29th.

In order to guide the second district chair and those who are hearing this appeal, we have sought to gather together all the documentary evidence that we have, obtain testimony from those who have witnessed events surrounding this matter, and to organize the material so that you can follow it as simply as possible. This has been a VERY difficult job given the short time that we have had to prepare for this meeting.

Our question is, has Cheryl Benitez done the same? Has she been transparent with you? Has she produced all the documents in her possession in relation to this matter? We have produced emails authored by Cheryl Benitez related to her obstruction of holding a Special Meeting, documents that she authored. We have produced documents she authored, cancelling meetings. Has she produced for you those same documents? This is all evidence of what has really been going on.

In her letter of complaint to you Cheryl Benitez said:

The initial idea of censuring Senator McConnell came as a surprise to the leadership and passed with a majority (18-6) vote on August 8, 2022, but there was no specific verbiage of the censure until a special meeting to consider the censure was held on Tuesday, November 29, 2022.

In that one sentence we have two malicious lies.

She states that she was surprised by the meeting of August 8, 2022. She gives the impression that she was ambushed. This is absurd. A simple review of documents that existed before the August 8th meeting, and the attempts to get her to put the matter on the agenda for August 8th, will prove that she is lying to you. She knew precisely what we wanted to vote on in that meeting and she was acting, from the beginning, to keep that from happening.

She states that she had no verbiage before the November 29th meeting. The fact is that the committee that was struck on August 8th, to put our complaints into a censure resolution, had completed their job by the first of September. Cheryl Benitez was informed of this. At no time did she ask for a copy of that resolution.

During the period of September 1st to November 29th Cheryl Benitez acted to obstruct holding a meeting to ratify the censure resolution. Frustrated with her behavior we were forced to produce a signed petition to hold a Special Meeting. Cheryl fought that.

Unfortunately Cheryl was NOT alone in her efforts to stop us from having that meeting.

Cheryl sought and received support for her inexcusable behavior from Hunter Whitaker who advised her and us that Cheryl could ignore our petition for a Special Meeting for as long as she

wanted. Whitaker said that there was no time limit for her to respond to that petition. Is that really a fair reading of the rules about a petition to hold a Special meeting?

Laura Larue was involved. Laura Larue told us that there was NO NEED for a Special Meeting as the August 8, 2022 meeting was all that was required.

Why this effort to silence us? It was all to protect Senator McConnell from criticism. It is Senator McConnell who worked with Democrats to pass their anti-gun, pro-Red Flag legislation. It is not us who departed from the platform of our party, he did. And Cheryl Benitez has done as much, defending Senator McConnell every step of the way to shield him from criticism by the majority of our county party.

Where is the thanks that we deserve for standing up for the Constitution against the Democrats and Senator McConnell? Where is the thanks we deserve for defending the Republican Party platform? Instead of thanks we are labelled extremists. Instead of a Chair who is a servant of the County Party we are faced with obstruction and deceit.

Having lost the democratic vote, Cheryl Benitez wants YOU to muzzle us. She wants you to decide we are breaking the rules. This is completely unbelievable! Are you really going to go along with this?

What WE ask is that you affirm our right as a county party to express our views when the majority vote to do so. What we also ask is that you examine whether or not Cheryl Benitez should be removed as chair, as a result of the evidence of her malfeasance. She has already publicly resigned, we simply ask that you uphold that resignation.

The evidence, if you carefully consider it, supports our position. We remain available to answer any questions or to comment further. Thank you for your time and consideration of our case.