

REFORM PARTY OF OKLAHOMA MAY TAKE VOTER REGISTRATION CONFLICT TO COURT

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) The Reform Party of Oklahoma may take its voter registration dispute with the State Election Board to court, a spokeswoman for the recently recognized political party said Friday.

Elissa Meininger, volunteer spokeswoman for the party's Oklahoma affiliate, confirmed that the organization has spoken with legal counsel and is weighing a number of possible alternatives for addressing what party officials described as a possible "sign that we have a disorganized State Election Board that is terribly inefficient."

In a Wednesday press conference, Dale Welch Barlow, chairperson of the Reform Party of Oklahoma, and Libertarian Party candidate Agnes Regier complained that potential voters were being denied the opportunity to register as members of their parties by tag agents, the League of Women Voters and the Republican and Democrat parties. The pair pointed to the state's voter registration form and the unwillingness of the election board to update the form and inform voter registrars of the parties' recognition as underlying causes of the problem.

The form lists only the two major politi-

cal parties as options for new registrants, as well as "no party" or independent.

Election Board Secretary Lance Ward said the Reform and Libertarian parties were not added to the form for two reasons. First, he explained, the parties were recognized in June, when only a few days would be open for new voters to register. Voter registry books were closed from late August to early October because of ongoing elections. The longest time during which new voters could register was the past two week period, he said. Secondly, more than one million voter registration forms were already printed and in the hands of voter registrars, Ward said. That, combined with the possibility that the two parties might not received the required 10 percent of the general election vote to remain recognized political parties, made it impractical to reprint the forms for the short registration period, Ward explained.

While Meininger agreed it would be unwise to reprint the forms under present circumstances, she said it is her party's belief that the election board failed to live up to its promise to properly notify voter registrars of the Reform and Libertarian parties' recognition.

"That's what we were told in the summer that they were going to do," she said.

Barlow suggested Wednesday that a sign that lists the parties in which one could declare membership be provided to voter registrars to help alleviate the problem. Ward rejected that suggestion.

"First of all," Ward explained, "that could

lead to additional problems because most of the members of those parties are already members of the other political parties. They could not change their party affiliation during the current registration period, and I think such an effort would have resulted in a greater level of confusion.

"Additionally, we do not want tag agents or other voter registrars advising those who are registering about what they can or cannot do. We would rather they took the voter registration forms and submitted them to the election board. To do anything more, I think, leaves the door open to even greater confusion."

While Meininger said others in the Reform Party mull possible legal action against the election board, the party's Oklahoma City headquarters has become a haven for those wanting to register under the new party's banner. The group announced Wednesday that it would begin its own effort to register voters.

"Of course, we would hope everyone would join the Reform Party, but we're not just taking registrations from those who do," Meininger said. "In fact, we don't even look at the forms and see how they registered."

BOREN INTRODUCES NEW CAMPAIGN TOOL

By Shawn Ashley
Staff Writer

■(GIT) His cousin, David, had a broom and a brigade that promised a "clean sweep" of state government. On Friday, Jim Boren unveiled his latest tool in his campaign for the US Senate — what he called the Boren Protective Device Against Inhofe's Untreated Sewage, a bathroom plunger.

Boren, D-Tahlequah, accused Jim Inhofe, the incumbent Republican Senator from Tulsa, of taking their race "into the sewer" by launching what he said were last minute personal attacks designed to prop up his falling poll numbers. The plunger, he explained, was his way of bringing the campaign out of the sewer.

Specifically, Boren took issue with two recent Inhofe television ads. The first, Boren said, attempts to make fun of "fat people with beards." The second commercial takes aim at Boren's writings, which the ad defines as sexist.

The first commercial, Boren joked, "ensures me I'll get the pudgy vote."

Of the second commercial, Boren said,

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★★ Important Date ★★

General Election
Tuesday, November 5

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A division of

GIT, Inc.

P.O. Box 61206

Oklahoma City, OK 73146-1206

Office (405) 528-2546

Fax (405) 521-9807

Net: gitinc@ionet.net

Web: <http://www.exoweb.com/git>

Darwin P. Maxey, Publisher

Mary Millen, Editor

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Governor's Flights, cont. from page 1 political event to another, and lo and behold, that's just what happened. What it amounts to is Governor Keating using taxpayer dollars to advance his own partisan political agenda."

That view was also shared by Betty McElderry, chairwoman of the Oklahoma Democratic Party, who said, "There are some very serious allegations of abuse of power and misuse of taxpayer funds that must be addressed by legal authorities as soon as possible."

Mahoney disagreed, noting that state law says the Department of Public Safety shall provide the governor and his family with transportation, as well as security.

"You could say that if the governor wanted to go to the moon that the department would have to find a way to take him," joked Mahoney.