

## Ellyne en Pointe - State GOP holds convention

Posted by [TBN Editor](#) On 11/23/2015



Solomons, MD - THE 2015 Maryland GOP Fall Convention was held Friday and Saturday, Nov. 20 and 21 at the Holiday Inn Solomons. Over 300 Republican Central Committee (RCC) members and guests were in attendance.

Registration began at 5 p.m. on Friday. The Hospitality Suites opened at 8 p.m. Hosting the Suites were the Montgomery County Republican Central Committee, Richard Douglas for U.S. Senate, Sam Faddis for Congress (5th District), Ted Cruz 2016, Congressman Andy Harris/Kathy Szeliga for U.S. Senate, Barry Donadio, Chris Kefalas for U.S. Senate, the Calvert County RCC, Maryland for Marco Rubio, the Black Republican Council, and the St. Mary's County RCC (Julie Burk-Greer, Chair). Each Suite offered opportunities for camaraderie along with delicious food and drink boasting of Maryland specialties such as stuffed ham, and freshly-shucked oysters.

At Saturday morning's breakfast, a U.S. Senate Candidate Panel featured speakers Richard Douglas, Chrys Kefalas and Kathy Szeliga.

Part I of the General Session was called to order at 9 a.m. by MD GOP Chair Diana Waterman. St. Mary's County's very own Mary Burke-Russell, former SMC RCC chair and now MD GOP first vice-chair, was seated at the Head Table along with Executive Committee members second vice-chair Larry Helminiak, third vice-chair Eugene Craig, National Committeewoman Nicolee Ambrose, National Committeeman Louis Pope, Treasurer R. Christopher Rosenthal and Secretary John D. Wafer. Waterman explained that Governor Hogan was attending the RGA meeting out-of-town, and Lt. Governor Rutherford had personal commitments during this convention. She encouraged a round of applause in thanks for Hogan's continued cancer-free recovery. Delegate Deb Rey and Senator Steve Waugh were in attendance.

Waugh, during his remarks, told the audience that Maryland is the home of freedom of religion and stated that he supported Hogan's call to first assure our safety. Some of Hogan's achievements in his first 10 months in office were noted during the morning session including that on day one, he submitted the first structurally balanced budget in more than a decade. He subsequently has closed the Baltimore Detention Center and has established the Heroin-Opioid Task Force. Phenomenal investments have been made in Baltimore City after the riots. Maryland is now friendly to businesses and Maryland is promoted abroad.

Congressman Andy Harris praised Paul Ryan in his new role as speaker of the House as being a great communicator. He maintained that in the matter of security and law enforcement must be supported at all levels. The recent events in Paris have shown us that 9-11 is not over and that we must declare war on ISIS as a war to win. He continued that we must recognize that local elections are important, and that money must be raised in our counties to support GOP candidates. Harris believes that "grassroots" is the most important organization in the state. His closing comment was a reminder that only 350 days remain until Election Day!

Waugh, who leads the Republican Senate Committee, spoke a second time during this morning session and reminded everyone that Maryland now has 14 state Senators but needs 19.

Maryland House of Delegates Minority Whip Kathy Szeliga said that the state is committed to education and to accountability. She gave the staggering fact that almost \$17,000 per pupil is spent in Baltimore City.

Lucas Boyce from the RNC shared his personal story of growing up in foster care, of being adopted and of having had the privilege of appearing in a photo op with President Bush after 9-11 in 2002. He stressed the importance of creating a "ground game" and ended his talk by saying that the true character of a person could be judged by how they treat the person who can do nothing for them.

Secretary Wafer's minutes from the Spring 2015 Convention held in Ocean City, MD were approved, and he credited Chair Waterman as a "GOP VIP." Several convention workshops were held during the day on topics including the GOP Data Center, Grassroots Activists Training, Campaign Finance Compliance and Hispanic Outreach.

The MDGOP General Session, Part 2 began at 2 p.m. with Nicolee Ambrose presenting her National Committeewoman's report. She played a video of Alveda King's visit to Baltimore, post-riot. Alveda is Martin Luther King Jr.'s niece.

Congressman J.C. Watts made a November visit to Baltimore City. Both of these visits were arranged by the MD GOP, and were reported on favorably in The Baltimore Sun.

Ms. Ambrose then presented Voter Registration Awards to Caroline, Harford, Queen Anne, and Baltimore counties, and to Baltimore City.

Nicolee will be hosting the MD GOP Christmas party at her home in Baltimore on Saturday, Dec. 12 from 6 to 9 p.m. with guest speaker MD Congressman Andy Harris, in conjunction with the Books and Backpacks Project to collect new or used books for grades K-12, and new or gently used backpacks and school supplies. The Office of Governor Larry Hogan is collecting these items for Maryland students of all ages and their school libraries. (You may contact Mac.Love@Maryland.gov for more information on the Books and Backpacks endeavor). You may RSVP for the Christmas party to margot@mdgop.org.

Other speaker highlights from the afternoon session included Dr. Joanne Fisher, representing Women's Veterans United; National Committeeman Louis Pope who stated that there are 32 GOP governors across the U.S.; Chair Waterman, who shared the news that Governor Hogan has a 69 percent approval rating and is one of the top three governors in the nation; Christine McElvoy, a senior at Johns Hopkins University and second-term state chair of the Maryland Federation of College Republicans, who reported that there are 11 College Republican chapters in the state; and Cyndi Schaff, credentials chair, who reported that the convention attendance resulted in a quorum being present.

There followed a lengthy discussion of proposed amendments. Article XIV regarding the Process for Filling Legislative Vacancies by County Central Committees passed with a 2/3 majority. Article V, 5.5 dealing with Responsibility for Litigation Costs was tabled Article VI, 6.2 on Membership and Voting centered around a request to grant the Presiding Officer of the MD Black Republican Council one vote during proceedings of the Executive Committee; this amendment was ultimately sent back to the Committee.

The top three winners of the Presidential Straw Poll were announced: Ted Cruz was the number one vote-getter, Marco Rubio was in second place, and Donald Trump in third place. Mike Huckabee and Rick Santorum tied for 10th place.

The Session adjourned at 5:30 p.m. and was followed by a 6 p.m. reception honoring the late Frank McCabe of Calvert County.

The 2016 MD GOP Spring Convention is scheduled for May 13 - 14 in Annapolis.

The 2016 Fall Convention will be held Dec. 2 - 3 in Frederick.

Note: The Friends of Del. Tony O'Donnell will hold a Thanksgiving Breakfast (with Chris Cakes Pancakes) on Sunday, November 29 from 8:30 to 11 a.m. This event will be held at American Legion Post 274 located at 11820 Harry G. Trueman Road in Lusby. The event is free; contributions will be accepted. You may RSVP to (301)855-6055.