

From: Paula Whitsell <[pwhitsell@gmail.com](mailto:pwhitsell@gmail.com)>  
Date: Sat, Nov 23, 2024 at 7:26 PM  
Subject: LET'S TALK ABOUT THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Yes, Carl DeMaio is the elephant in the room.

Corey and some of his backers would like everyone to think the recent drama within the RPSDC is all about Carl DeMaio. They see it as a choice between them and him.

That's a false choice – and a negligent and destructive framing of the issues we must address.

## **1 The Turmoil and Problems at RPSDC Extend Far Beyond Carl DeMaio**

Corey wants to make this about Carl DeMaio to distract you from his own egregious failures, lies, and abuses.

The reality is the RPSDC is in worse shape now than when Corey took over as Chair – we all know it.

- **Loss of Lincoln Club Support:** Contrary to Corey's claims, the senior leadership and donors at the Lincoln Club have said they will not accept him as Chair because he lied repeatedly to them and misused funds given by them. They have clearly stated they want him gone and will not fund the Party if he is Chair. They are supportive of our Succession Plan for Unity and want to see new leaders emerge.
- **Loss of Other Key Coalition Partners:** Other coalition groups are upset with Corey and the RPSDC – most notably San Diego County Gun Owners and several parent coalitions. These disputes have nothing to do with DeMaio. These partners are discouraged by the current Chair and want Team Unity to succeed.
- **Loss of Candidate and Volunteer Trust:** Many candidates and grassroots volunteers believe Corey and the RPSDC failed them in November. Some are not fond of DeMaio, but nonetheless share his frustration about the mismanagement and chaos they experienced in the November election.

## **2 The RPSDC Needs to Empower Regional Leadership – and You Individually**

The days of the RPSDC having a strong “Party Boss” are over – Corey is not that guy. Under our bylaw revisions, the Regional Caucuses with Regional Co-Chairs will take the lead on many efforts and have a genuine stake in the outcome.

Corey talks the talk, but he doesn't mean it. He has repeatedly belittled members' abilities and has refused to change the bylaws to empower the caucuses. Yes, Corey wants to be a “Party Boss” – but he can't be the strongman if other leaders have an ability to challenge him.

Moving to a regional model of leadership and giving more responsibility to individual Committee members has nothing to do with DeMaio and everything to do with respecting your input and empowering YOU to be leaders. That is a key aspect of the Succession Plan for Unity.

### **3 It Would Be a Huge Mistake To Be at War with Carl DeMaio and the Reform California Movement**

Like it or not, Carl DeMaio and the Reform California movement he leads are a key part of our coalition and path to future success. Corey's decision in September to go to war with DeMaio demonstrates profoundly bad judgment.

- **FUNDRAISING:** DeMaio is the number one Republican fundraiser in San Diego County – and even in California. We need him actively and enthusiastically raising money for Reform California and the party. From 2020 to 2023, DeMaio funded nearly \$1 million in RPSDC programs! Just like the Lincoln Club donors, DeMaio has said he will not fund RPSDC if Corey remains as Chair – and his voice carries weight with a lot of donors small and large.
- **MEDIA REACH:** DeMaio has a big following in San Diego County and gets massive media attention. Take notice, he has refrained so far from publicly criticizing the local party even though Corey and his surrogates repeatedly and openly attacked him. A vote for Corey is a vote for the continuation of this dispute and will diminish the Party's reputation.
- **CANDIDATES AND VOLUNTEERS:** DeMaio's Voter Guide is powerful and local candidates know it. If we are at war, you will see multiple Republicans running for the same office and splitting the vote. You'll see candidates and volunteers boycotting the party and siding with Reform CA. We all lose when we split the vote and fragment our scarce resources.

### **4 The Unity Team Isn't Carl DeMaio – We Have and Will Continue to Disagree on Things**

I was not Carl DeMaio's choice for Chair of this Party. He wanted another respected committee member as Chair, a person acceptable to both Lincoln Club and East County. That member was unable to take on the job.

When I decided recently to run again, one of my first calls was to DeMaio. He agreed to support me because of my intention to mentor and transition to new leadership. That is the Team Unity Succession Plan, including our slate and the devolution to the Supervisor District Caucuses.

***But let me be clear: Carl DeMaio and I have strongly disagreed in the past – and we will certainly disagree in the future.*** Here are just a few things Corey and his backers don't want you to know:

- In 2022, DeMaio joined the San Diego County Gun Owners in criticizing my

handling of the Sheriff's endorsement. DeMaio opted to not endorse our candidate in the primary, but I was able to negotiate his endorsement of our candidate for the general election.

- During the 2022 cycle, DeMaio criticized several of our school board candidate endorsements for not having the support of parent groups. At my urging, DeMaio accepted our endorsement decisions for the race provided that we improve the process in 2024.
- In June 2023, DeMaio and I fought bitterly over my decision to support the early endorsement in the 75th Assembly District race. DeMaio withdrew from joint candidate recruitment and endorsement process over our falling out.
- In the 2024 Primary, I openly and actively campaigned against DeMaio and in support of Andrew Hayes. We had a number of heated exchanges. However, because I never lied to him or broke a commitment, our relationship remained constructive, with the ability to negotiate, compromise, and resolve differences.

It was on that basis that I succeeded in negotiating a unity agreement with him in April 2024 – not to endorse him, but to enable RPSDC and DeMaio to navigate around the contentious race in the 75th so our grassroots donors and volunteers could unite to support our other candidates and not be distracted by infighting. Even though I was attacked for suggesting we go neutral, the deal supposedly accepted by my critics accomplished the same end.

Despite my success in negotiating this unity agreement, Corey intentionally broke it, or – if you believe his misrepresentations – at the very least presided over its demise. Regardless, the November 2024 election results vindicated my view on this matter, and loudly repudiated Corey's misjudgment.

Both DeMaio and I know we will disagree in the future – and if the past is prologue it will sometimes get heated. I have stood my ground before and done what is right for RPSDC – always with honesty and integrity, allowing me to work with others on things we do agree on.

## **5 East County – and You – Should Want Carl DeMaio Bound By a Unity Agreement**

Without wanting to be disrespectful, the East County elected officials who don't like Carl DeMaio are mistaken to be at odds with him when he and Reform California can just walk away from RPSDC.

If Carl DeMaio is united with the party, here's what we get:

- DeMaio will be expected to help fund the Party. If he leaves, these East County politicians – and you – will be responsible for the entire financial burden of party programs.

- We can expect DeMaio to collaboratively endorse GOP candidates as he did under a similar arrangement during 2020-2023. (Contrary to a misleading document some have been shown by Corey's team, DeMaio's agreement in 2024 was exclusively confined to not endorsing against EAST COUNTY candidates. You can see the real agreements with DeMaio by viewing the PDF attached to this email or by asking Lincoln Club leaders or DeMaio directly.)
- DeMaio will be expected to cooperate in candidate recruitment and volunteer deployments – just as he did for County Supervisor Joel Anderson in 2020 and Sen. Brian Jones and Andrew Hayes in 2022.

The smart move is to rope DeMaio into working within the party as a team player – not doing his own thing on the outside. Our Team Unity has been able to achieve this commitment from DeMaio – and having scorched the earth you know damn well Corey cannot.

## **6 Conclusion: This Isn't About Who You Like – It is About Your Role and the Future of RPSDC**

You can like Carl DeMaio or dislike him – but you should make your decisions as a Central Committee member on what role YOU want to have in leading this party and how we can best serve the voters who elected us to fix the problems at RPSDC.

My campaign for reelection has thus far been based upon a positive message for the future: **mentoring** a new generation of leaders and **devolving** responsibility, authority, and resources to the regional caucuses.

**Despite my positive message, a political campaign naturally involves criticism of one's opponent.** I will try to do that with civility. In the end, after the December 9 election, we all need to work together.

Best regards,  
Paula Whitsell