

How and Why did a Garden Variety Voter Get Involved in Politics? What is a Central Committee?

It was November 1992 when the unthinkable occurred: Bill Clinton became President-elect of the United States. I honestly believed that Bill Clinton was an evil man and that his wife was even worse. I believed that in 1992. And unfortunately, history has served to reinforce my belief. I was horrified by the results of what I called "Black Tuesday." Subsequently, I concluded that I had to do more than just vote.

A few months later, a friend of mine told me about an organization called the Republican Central Committee. He knew me well, and knew that I needed to get involved. It didn't take a lot of convincing, but I did have a lot of questions.

The populace, who choose to vote in their Party's primary election, elects the Central Committee members. Each county is divided into neighborhoods called precincts. The Precinct Committeemen make up the membership of the township and county Central Committees. The elected Precinct Committeemen in each township elect a township chairman. The township chairmen makeup the Executive Committee. The Party chairman is often a member of the Executive Committee. The Precinct Committeemen decide who will be in charge and who will be making policy. Each county may be a little different than how I have described. The two political Parties may also be slightly different. If you contact your board of elections and/or Party chairman, you will get the facts specific to you.

It is usually easy to become a Precinct Committeeman:

1. To get your name on the ballot, simply fill out a petition and get five of your neighbors, who are in your political Party (and precinct), to sign it.
2. To become a write-in candidate, fill out a form and sign it.
3. To get appointed to an open position anyplace in your township, contact your Party's township chairman or county chairman.

Your local board of elections can give you all of the information you need to become a candidate. They can also direct you to the appropriate people if you wish to seek an appointment.

You will find your Party's chairman to be very receptive to your interest. The meetings are open, so feel free to ask if you may begin attending them as a visitor. Your regular attendance at their meetings will likely put you in the front of the line for an

appointment. The larger townships frequently have openings. You may therefore get appointed quickly.

Attending meetings and/or becoming a Precinct Committeeman is very beneficial. To begin with, you will meet and get to know many of your elected officials. These officials often times rely on the backing of the Party. As a Precinct Committeeman, your support will be important to them. Therefore, you will be in a position to talk to them about issues that are important to you. In other words, the position of Precinct Committeeman is a position of influence.

Keep in mind that the position is a job. You will be expected to participate in the “get-out-the-vote” effort. Certain candidates will appeal to you more than others. Consider working on their election campaigns.

If you decide that you like inside politics, you might want to consider becoming a candidate for a higher office. One of those higher offices is that of State Central Committeeman. Again, it only takes five signatures to get your name on the ballot. However, you will have to compete for the position in a much larger area. The State Central Committeemen decide who the state Party chairman will be. It is also a position of influence and greater responsibility.

Phyllis Schlafly wrote a very good article about the power of the Precinct Committeeman. You can find it at <http://www.eagleforum.org/misc/brochures/precinct-committman.shtml>. You can also contact me at John@BeckerGOP.com if I can be of any service.

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