

A Voice for Every Oklahoman

When I started posting videos explaining State Question 836, I expected debate. What I didn't expect were tons of people saying they've never had the chance to vote for local officials – sheriffs, district attorneys, county commissioners, etc. Reading those remarks made me think about the many unheard voices in our state.

This is the story of hundreds of thousands of Oklahomans who are willing to show up yet have no choice in choosing the local leaders who impact their daily lives most.

Right now in Oklahoma, Independent and Libertarian voters are locked out of most local primaries. In many counties, these primaries decide the winner, rendering the general election a mere formality -- a far cry from what our forefathers intended.

These voters pay the same taxes that fund law enforcement, schools, and elections, yet have no say in who enforces those laws, simply because of the box they checked when registering to vote.

What I've come to understand about this growing block of voters is that they aren't asking for special treatment. They're asking for equal footing; to have a say in who represents them in their communities.

Even the framers of our state constitution, as imperfect as they were, understood that the power belongs to the people. They believed this so intently that they wrote in safeguards so ordinary citizens could propose or reject laws should leadership fail to listen.

Yet today, some of those safeguards are being threatened. For example, the recently passed SB 1027, that tightened restrictions on citizen-led petitions; the same process that will bring SQ 836 to the ballot. The same process our founders intended to hold government accountable.

Democracy thrives on competition and choice. It only works when all of us get a say. And I can say confidently: there is not even a hint of democracy present in closed-door, one-party outcomes. When laws like SB 1027 are written to undermine and silence voters, it chips away at the very idea of democracy and leaves voters weary.

When people feel like they don't get a say, they disengage. They stop showing up. And when fewer people vote, power consolidates. Not because they chose it, but because it's often uncontested.

Every Oklahoman has felt the effects of decisions made without good representation. We all know what it's like: Rising tension. Less trust. Leaders who talk at us instead of to us. But that cycle won't break until We the People seize the moment, and demand that our voices be heard – all of them.

State Question 836 would open Oklahoma's primaries to all registered voters regardless of party. Instead of a small fraction of the electorate deciding who makes it to the general election, we'd all get a say from the start.

More voices mean better choices. Candidates would have to compete and appeal to all Oklahomans, not just their party base. This makes for leaders who are more focused on serving people, not politics.

I've had several people reach out with the attitude that nothing is ever going to change. I want to address those people directly: If you've ever wondered why you only have one option, this is your moment to change that. If you've ever felt like your voice didn't matter in your state or county, this is your chance to be heard. And if you've ever uttered the words, "my vote doesn't matter anyway," it matters now.

Our constitution was built on the belief that government should serve the people and sometimes, we must remind them of that promise. State Question 836 is that reminder.