

Statement by Common Cause Georgia Board Members, May 4, 2015

We are 4 of 12 members – one third -- of the board of Common Cause Georgia (CCGA). We are Democrats, Republicans, and Independents and we include three board chairmen – past, present, and chairman-elect. We are leaving the board because we are moderates and conservatives and we are no longer welcome in the newly defined, ideological Common Cause created by the new national (CCDC) president, Miles Rapoport. All four of us are also calling on both CCDC and CCGA to stop falsely describing themselves as “nonpartisan.”

Two of us (Bob and Terry) have been removed from the CCGA board by Mr. Rapoport. The other two of us have resigned from the CCGA board because we do not support the new ideological straitjacket being imposed. CCDC and Mr. Rapoport want to eliminate diversity on the Common Cause Georgia board and we object to that.

CCGA has been a nonpartisan watchdog organization and our board roster, leadership, and above all our positions and issues have reflected that. This has given us political credibility, and moreover we believe it reflects the desire of many Americans to work together for the good of all of us. We have been committed to holding power accountable – for transparency, accountability, and ethics in government. We have pursued issues that citizens of all ideologies and both parties can agree on: putting a cap on lobbyist gifts, eliminating pay-to-play, establishing strong ethics boards and policies in state and local governments, and nonpartisan redistricting. We have supported CCDC issues insofar as our board could reach a consensus for them.

CCDC has always allowed us to set our own agenda in Georgia. Now, however, the new national president has decided this is no longer acceptable. He has expanded CCDC’s positions to the left, beyond “holding power accountable” to include, for example, “social, economic, and environmental justice.” He has demanded that all of us on the CCGA board agree to support whatever positions CCDC takes, “without further complaint”, including even working on issues in which we do not personally believe. He has demanded that we do this, or that we must resign or be removed.

Instead of CCGA being nonpartisan, he insists we become, like CCDC, a left-leaning policy advocacy organization. We have said NO to Mr. Rapoport. As a result, former board chairman Bob Irvin, Republican, and incoming board chairman Terry Taylor, Democrat, have been purged by the national president. Current board chairman Lucius Morton, Republican, has resigned in protest. Board member Phyllis Fraley, Independent, has resigned protesting CCDC’s new ideological mandate.

Georgia needs a truly nonpartisan watchdog organization advocating for transparency, accountability, and ethics in state and local government. CCGA is no longer that. We hope a new organization will arise in its place to fill that role.

Bob Irvin, Atlanta

Terry Taylor, Smyrna

Lucius Morton, Columbus

Phyllis Fraley, Atlanta

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