

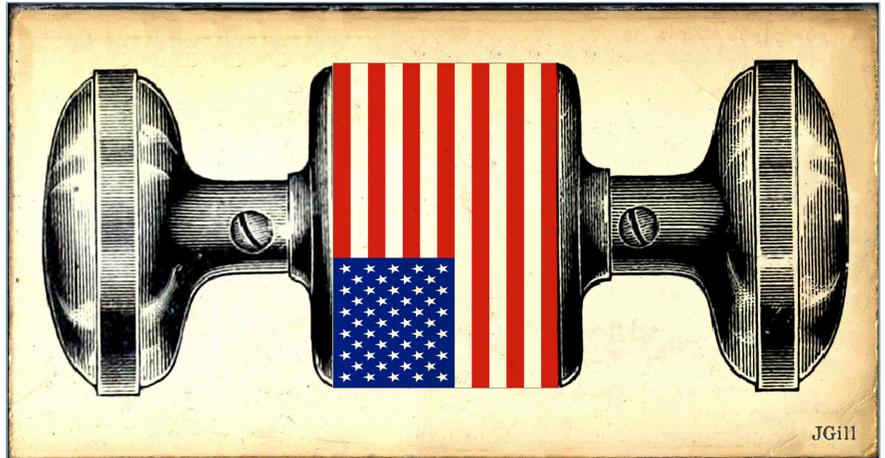
May 21, 2015

Anti-Democratic Republicans?

The Republican Party of Ohio paid lawyers \$300,000 to keep a competitor off the ballot.

Typical two-party corruption. We can blame the party, yes — but also blame the system.

A “two-party system” is, mathematicians tell us, the logical result of a simple plurality/winner-takes-all elections. That is, when the first candidate “past the post” wins enough votes to best any other, that candidate wins.



When you count votes like this, two parties emerge to dominate.

But to *really* rule the roost, those parties are incentivized to pile on . . . to make it hard for “minor-party” challengers. Ballot access becomes a nasty business.

Last year Charlie Earl ran for the governorship of Ohio as a Libertarian Party candidate. But he was blocked from the ballot. And when the Ohio LP “filed a federal lawsuit to try to force Earl’s name on the ballot,” Ohio Republican Party Chair Matt Borges testified that his party had nothing to do with the legal maneuvers involved.

As Borges put it at the time, “Anyone who’s looking for the conspiracy behind it — it’s just not there.”

Now, it turns out, the conspiracy was there. His party paid the bills.

Whether Borges was lying or not — *maybe* he was clueless about these shenanigans — the deed got done.

More important than whether Borges himself can be held culpable for the ballot-access conspiracy, it’s the system that encourages such anti-democratic nonsense that needs changing. First-past-the-post elections must go. There are alternatives, as my friends at FairVote.org champion.

As Ohio GOP leaders stand shame-faced with the evidence of evildoing, it’s time to press such reforms.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.