

Are Donald Trump and Ted Cruz the Odd Men Out in the GOP?

Four years ago, to prevent a floor fight from supporters of then-U.S. Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), the Republican National Committee changed the nomination rules prior to the national convention.

Those rules, even according to members of the rules committee as late as three weeks ago, were still in effect for the 2016 Republican National Convention. But despising the two men leading the race for the GOP nomination, the party's establishment seems to have changed those rules while no one was looking.

According to the *Washington Examiner*:

Ben Ginsberg, a Republican elections lawyer who was involved in rule-making process for the 2012 convention, said that Rule 40(b) isn't transferrable to the 2016 convention. Ginsberg explained to the Washington Examiner that what was passed in 2012 applied only to 2012, and that the 2016 convention must pass its own rule determining nomination eligibility.

RNC Chairman Reince Priebus confirmed Ginsberg's assessment on Sunday during a television interview. "There will always be a perception problem if people continue to miss—to not explain the process properly. So, the 2012 rules committee writes the rules for the 2012 convention. The 2016 rules committee writes the rules for the 2016 convention," he told CNN.

Effectively, the RNC's position has changed to "the voters don't decide the nominee, the party does." What remains to be seen is what kind of backlash this may create among voters, of which more than 90 percent have said in exit polling they feel

“betrayed” by the GOP.

Trump and Cruz could be the odd men out now that party officials say any candidate—not just those with delegate majorities from eight or more states—are eligible for the nomination. Suddenly, Ohio Gov. John Kasich’s plan to win a contested convention, and conspiracy theories about “white knight” candidates such as Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), suddenly don’t sound so crazy.