

Reince Priebus: There Will Be Penalties for #NeverTrump Candidates

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, and Ohio Gov. John Kasich face some “tough love” from the Republican National Committee if they continue to refuse to endorse GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump in spite of signing a pledge to do so.

Chairman Reince Priebus didn't mince words when he discussed his frustration with the #NeverTrump faction. During an interview with CBS's *Face the Nation* broadcast Sunday morning, he said:

“People who agreed to support the nominee, that took part in our process, they used tools from the RNC. They agreed to support the nominee, they took part in our process. We're a private party. We're not a public entity. Those people need to get on board.

“And if they're thinking they're going to run again someday, I think that we're going to evaluate the process—of the nomination process, and I don't think it's going to be that easy for them.”

Pressed to explain what that meant, Priebus added:

“People in our party are talking about what we're going to do about this. There is a ballot access issue in South Carolina. In order to be on the ballot in South Carolina, you actually have to pledge your support to the nominee, no matter who that person is.

“What's the penalty for that? It's not a threat. It's just a question that we have a process in place.

“And if a private entity puts forward a process and has agreement with the participants in that process, and those participants don’t follow through with the promises that they made in that process, what—what should a private party do about that if those same people come around in four or eight years?”

The Palmetto State was one of several states that required candidates to pledge their loyalty to the party’s eventual nominee in order to secure a slot on the primary ballot. These “loyalty pledges” aren’t unusual, and have been used for years, but the exact ramifications for not following through would require legal action, or some other declaration by the RNC’s Committee on Contests.

Of the three major #NeverTrumpers who were 2016 presidential candidates, only Kasich responded to Priebus’ comments. In an official statement Sunday afternoon, the governor’s chief political strategist, John Weaver, said:

“Throughout his life, Governor John Kasich has always made decisions based on what is best for our country. The idea of a greater purpose beyond oneself may be alien to political party bosses like Reince Priebus, but it is at the center of everything Governor Kasich does. He will not be bullied by a Kenosha political operative that is unable to stand up for core principles or beliefs.

“In fact, Reince should be thanking the Governor for standing for an inclusive, conservative vision that can actually win a national election and improve our country. The Governor is traveling the nation supporting down ballot Republicans and preventing a potential national wipeout from occurring on Reince’s watch.”