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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stop the infighting and false endorsements – The People deserve the truth and real action

As military veteran and conservative candidate for the District 19 congressional seat, I stand for honesty and integrity in all matters. Especially those matters related to politics and government. Today the Tea Party Express made a public endorsement of Curt Clawson. In doing so, the Tea Party Express has violated the public trust and has engaged in the same cronyism we frequently accuse the established political parties of enacting.

Last night, I personally reached out to the Executive Director of the Tea Party Express, Taylor Budowich. I asked Mr. Budowich if they would consider delaying the announcement of the endorsement until the Tea Party Express had an opportunity to conduct due diligence of all candidates in this race. His response:

“We have done our due diligence in regards to this race a feel confident in our announcement tomorrow. I understand you have some reservations about Mr. Clawson's business experience, we do not. We feel he has been the target of baseless smears that should be held against the institutions the levied them, not Curt.”

For the record, the Tea Party Express has not contacted me or any member of my campaign to assess my position of issues, convictions to conservative values and principles, or to gather any relevant information about my capability to as a representative of the people. Budowich did offer the criteria by which the Tea Party Express choses its candidates for endorsement.

- 1) “First and probably the easiest, the candidate must independently request our support;
- 2) The candidate must exhibit a fidelity to fiscal conservatism;
- 3) the candidate must exhibit moral courage - that is, the courage to take on a challenge in the face of scrutiny or pressure, because they know it's the right thing to do;
- 4) the candidate must have earned local tea party support;
- 5) finally, the candidate must put together a competent and able-bodied campaign.”

Since much of the Tea Party Express' assessment was based on "feeling" I requested measures of objectiveness. I asked Budowich to make the documented results of their assessment public so that the people can understand how the selection was made. No response was offered. Local Tea Party supporters should demand the work product of the Tea Party Express. We cannot allow the few to mislead the many. The above criterion makes no assessment to determine the "best" candidate in the race. However, it does measure the wealth of a candidate. I understand the Tea Party stands for values, principals, and patriotism – not special interest and greed. As I have been embraced by many of the grassroots Tea Party organizations in District 19, I am confident that the California-based Tea Party Express does not reflect the will or psychology of the people in Southwest Florida.

I will not contribute to the seemingly endless stream of negative advertising among the Republican candidates. But, I will say that there is a lot of truth in the advertisements and the people need to do their own research. The people should not simply rely on endorsements that are biased by ulterior motives and/or flawed by poor evaluation. The people deserve better. There numerous public forums scheduled between now and the April 22 primary election. I encourage all District 19 voters to show up to one or more of the forums, even though some of the congressional candidates have decided not to engage directly with the people, including Mr. Clawson. We need to hold all of the candidates accountable for being accessible and honest – if they have a problem with that during a campaign how will they ever be accessible and honorable in office?

We need to move this nation forward towards conservative values, smaller government, and personal and government accountability. Political infighting will only serve to erode our ability to fight the right fight. I am calling for all of the Republican candidates to **immediately stop their negative campaign ads and to start talking about what we need to do to reclaim this great nation**. I challenge each Republican candidate to clearly declare their positions on the key issues and sign their name to a binding document with the people, as I have and as posted at www.DreikornForCongress.com. The people should not have to wonder where a candidate stands – it should be clearly defined. Accountability is critical to the process of representation. And, I am calling for all candidates to require their endorsers to, at a minimum, reach out to the other candidates in a fair vetting process so that the endorsements have measurable value.

As a nation, if we are collective in our values and integrity, we will stand tall and strong – divided we will surely fall in disgrace.

At your service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael J. Dreikorn', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael J. Dreikorn, Ed.D.

Veteran, Businessman and Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives (FLCD19)