

## WORKING DRAFT

If you fill a bucket with crabs and watch what happens you'll see a remarkable thing. In attempting to regain freedom and return to the cool waters that once housed them, they pull each other down. As one crab grasps the bucket's rim and begins the strenuous escape from captivity, others selfishly pull it back down: promoting individual versus collective goals. Newspapers, blogs, and emails across the state have recently been inundated with news of campaign conspiracies within Utah's second Congressional district; and while political conspiracy is nothing new, it now increasingly threatening as accusations split and weaken the Republican party.

A complaint was recently submitted to the Federal Election Committee accusing Republican Congressional nominee, Chris Stewart, of campaign fraud. The complaint was filed on behalf of Dave Clark, Cheryl Egar, Howard Wallack, and Chuck Williams (all of which were running for Congress within the same district before being defeated at the State Convention). As expected, this conflict remains hazy in the eyes of the public as facts become scarce and baseless accusations fly freely across the headlines.

Clark, Egar, Wallack, and Williams complain of being accused of conspiring together prior to county caucuses to form an Anybody But Chris coalition (A.B.C.). The focus of their complaint is an anonymous letter that harshly criticized Chris by making baseless accusations. Spurred by this anonymous letter these candidates began demonizing Stewart after witnessing his campaign successes. In effort to eliminate competition, the group acted as crabs- clawing at Stewart to prevent him from leaving the bucket of their soon-to-be failed campaigns. Like the crabs in the bucket these former candidates, despite the fact that there is no evidence against Stewart, have now formally accused his campaign of authoring the anonymous letter and conspiring with yet another former candidate to accuse them at convention of being the authors and thereby sink their campaigns.

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An investigation by the Utah Republican Party, which took place following the state convention, found no evidence that Clark, Eager Wallack or Williams authored the letter but also found no evidence that Stewart and Hanks conspired to produce the letter and disrupt the convention. Stewart has gladly accepted any investigation, knowing full well that he is innocent of breaching any campaign laws. Unfortunately though, this negative publicity has weakened the Republican Party's unity and perception in the state and across the country.

There is no training crabs, they cannot be changed from their natural state; however these 'crabs' can and will influence the election for the worse if we too fall into the bucket of their self-interested plans. The second district is fortunate to have a candidate able to rise above this bucket of grabbing crabs; hopefully voters do the same.

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