



Time to End Closed Door Leadership Elections? Bricktown Rotary Hosts Discussions on Archaic Legislative Practice

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(Oklahoma City) -- This coming Monday night, May 10th, the Bricktown Rotary Club will feature an extraordinary discussion about the legislative process in Oklahoma.

With half the state Senate and all of the House of Representatives up for election this fall, and because the current leaders in both chambers are term limited, there will be new leadership working with the new governor next January. Under the present system, the public likely won't even know who is running until the results of the closed door meetings are announced.

"The race for governor will feature an exhaustive examination of those who seek to succeed Gov. Henry. Over the course of the next few months, the candidates for governor will spend millions of dollars in advertising, direct mail and pre-recorded phone calls. Voters will have opportunities to meet the candidates face to face at countless meetings, county events and ballgames. Yet the two other key leaders in the lawmaking process are chosen in closed-door meetings with no opportunity for voters to know even the most general information about those who will lead the legislature in 2011," says Peter Fulmer, Bricktown Rotary President.

House majority members have already announced that State Rep. Kris Steele of Shawnee has secured the backing to be the next Speaker, but the Senate leader position is rumored to be hotly contested. The club has invited what some capitol insiders consider to be the leading candidates: Republican State Senators Brian Bingman of Sapulpa and Harry Coates of Seminole. Additionally, Senate Minority Leader Andrew Rice of Oklahoma City has been invited to attend. Thus far both Coates and Rice have accepted the invitation to speak.

"This is not a transparent process, and reminds many of the old stereo-type of the closed-door, smoke filled room political process from yesteryear. We are curious to know why this process continues, and whether or not the process should be opened up for all to see, or whether there are legitimate reasons for shielding the public from picking leaders. It should be a fascinating discussion," Fulmer says.

Award-winning News9 Reporter Dave Jordan will moderate the discussion. **Bricktown Rotary meets every Monday upstairs at the Bricktown Brewery (1 N. Oklahoma, OKC, OK 73104) beginning at 5:30pm.** Media and any interested party are welcome to join us and witness a discussion that is important for Oklahoma going forward.