

# Dan Bongino Backs ‘Liberty’ Candidate for Cecil County Council, Past Backers Protest; Slates Heat Up County GOP Committee Contest

June 9, 2014

By [Nancy Schwerzler](#)

Dan Bongino, a former Secret Service agent who drew strong support among many Cecil County conservatives in his failed bid for a US Senate seat two years ago, has stuck his toe into Cecil County local politics this year by endorsing a controversial “Campaign for Liberty” candidate for County Council—much to the surprise and dismay of many of Bongino’s past supporters here.

Why an out-of-area candidate would dabble in Cecil County Republican politics before the primary election decided the party’s standard-bearers for the general election, and do so without discussions with his local supporters, is both puzzling and troubling to many of his past admirers here. But the decision may have something to do with solidifying ultra-conservative support for his latest political foray.

Bongino, who previously lived in Severna Park and now cites a residence in Frederick, is running this year for a US House seat in the sprawling 6th District covering western Maryland and part of suburban Montgomery County. Bongino faces a challenger in his own GOP primary that will decide the candidate who gets to wage an uphill struggle against the incumbent, Rep. John Delaney, a Democrat, in November.

Delaney defeated longtime incumbent Republican Roscoe Bartlett in the last election, after re-districting included more Democratic areas of Montgomery and Frederick counties. Bongino appears to be pinning his hopes on the fact that he is a younger and more energetic candidate than the elderly Bartlett and is trying to appeal to the conservative GOP core in Western Maryland, where there has been talk of a movement to secede from Maryland.

With so much on his own political plate, it came as a surprise several days ago that Bongino issued an endorsement of Robert Willick, a Rising Sun resident who is making his first run for political office as a standard bearer of the local “Campaign for Liberty” group that is aligned nationally with Sen. Rand Paul and his father, Ron Paul. (Bongino transferred \$1000 from his own political fund last fall to Sen. Paul’s election fund, according to Federal Election Commission filings.)

Willick is running for Cecil County Council in the Republican primary for the seat currently held by Michael Dunn (R-3) and he is also running for a seat on the nine-member Cecil County Republican Central Committee.

A third candidate in the Republican primary for the District 3 seat is Dan Schneckenburger, an engineer and volunteer on many county job creation and economic development advisory panels.

The core of Bongino’s support here two years ago came from members of the Cecil County Patriots, who knocked on doors for him, distributed flyers and donated to his Senate campaign. Bongino reciprocated, showing up for some of the group’s events such as a Christmas party.

But ever since Willick became a leader of the Cecil County chapter of the C4L group, his name has appeared on online postings attacking the Patriots, along with various county leaders such as County Executive Tari Moore and Council members Joyce Bowsbey (R-2) and Council President Robert Hodge (R-5). Those who have been attacked say that the C4L group publishes misleading or outright false accusations against its targets.

Bongino did not disclose in advance his intent to endorse Willick, according to multiple sources who formerly had close political ties to Bongino.

So many were shocked when Willick announced the Bongino endorsement on his Facebook page, which quoted Bongino as declaring: “Finally, there is a candidate for the upcoming election I have met, and he represents the change we need here in Maryland. In Cecil County, Robert J. Willick for County Council. This man is an outsider to the political process but he supports, and is willing to fight for, liberty, property rights and the expansion of economic prosperity, not government budgets. Please support this man.”

An outpouring of opposition was swift and firm, with emails and phone calls to Bongino and some posts on his Facebook wall denouncing the endorsement. Some local activists say their posts were deleted from Bongino’s page, although pro-Willick supporters’ comments were left in place. Also on Facebook, one disappointed Bongino backer relayed a conversation in which he said Bongino told him he was fed up with the local critics and as far as he was concerned he wanted nothing to do with Cecil County residents in the future.

“I was shocked and I told Dan that,” said Jackie Gregory, a leader in the local Patriots group. She spoke on the phone with him for quite some time, she told Cecil Times, and concluded that Bongino had not adequately researched some local issues before throwing his support to Willick. But most troubling, she said, was Bongino’s apparent attitude that she and others had no right to question his decision. (Gregory posted a report on her conversation on the Patriots’ website here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/180426786853/permalink/10152079286541854/>)

Cecil Times contacted Bongino's campaign on Monday for comment and to discuss briefly his reasons for the endorsement. His press secretary, Karla Graham, messaged back: "Thanks for reaching out. Dan has a very busy schedule today and is not available. Thanks for thinking of us."

While Willick has been a figurehead in the Cecil County C4L chapter, many of the online postings, flyers and robocalls that have gone out in the group's name bear the writing and campaign style of Ted Patterson, chair of the state Campaign for Liberty group and a candidate for the Cecil County GOP Central Committee.

Some local C4L activities have been financed by the Maryland Liberty PAC, a political action committee whose chairman is Patrick McGrady of Harford County, a close Patterson ally. The PAC's most recent filings to the state list Ted Patterson's wife, Jillian, as the treasurer of the PAC.

The Liberty PAC has shelled out consulting fees to an entity, "Stable Revolution Consulting," tied to some of the 'liberty' leaders: Patterson and McGrady. Some past consulting bills cited on campaign finance reports listed Patterson's address in Cecil County while most of the payments by the PAC list a post office box in Harford County that has been listed by McGrady as his own official mailing address on the Liberty PAC filings with the state.

During a recent political controversy in Harford County over proposed changes in rules for filling vacancies on the local GOP Central Committee—which includes several C4L members—several state Delegates cited the ties between Stable Revolution and the C4L leaders.

The Liberty PAC, which conducts fundraising efforts statewide, reported \$8,771 cash in its bank account as of mid-January, after receiving contributions of \$25,405 in 2013. The PAC listed total expenses of \$24,982—with the largest share, amounting to \$14,827, going to fees paid to the Stable group for robocalls, website and Facebook consulting work.

Meanwhile, things are heating up in the crowded field for Cecil County Republican Central Committee, with rival slates of 'mainstream' GOP members contending against a C4L slate.

Including some well-known names in local Republican circles, The United Republican Slate has registered its group with the state Board of Elections and has begun fundraising. Its recent 5/26/14 campaign report lists \$1,720 in contributions and \$840 in expenditures for campaign flyers and ads. Most of the donations came from members of the slate themselves. The slate includes Bob Amato; Michael W. "Good Mike" Dawson; Kevin Emmerich; Bill Harris; Kevin Hornberger; Tom Kenny; Ted Kolodzey; Kathy Kunda; and Joseph V. Zurolo.

The "Campaign for Liberty" candidates, although no formal slate has been filed with the state elections board, includes Bob Gorman, Ted Patterson, Michael A. Dawson (known in Perryville as MAD Mike to differentiate him from Michael W. "Good Mike" Dawson), Chris Zeauskas, Joe Tropp, Kathy Jagers, Carrie Taylor, Dave Miller and Willick. A new glossy flyer supporting the group's candidacy states it was paid for by the Maryland Liberty PAC.

Tags: [Board of Elections](#), [C4L](#), [Campaign for Liberty](#), [cecil county](#), [Congress](#), [County Council](#), [Dan Bongino](#), [district 6](#), [election](#), [Federal Election Commission](#), [GOP](#), [House](#), [Jacke Gregory](#), [John Delaney](#), [Liberty PAC](#), [Patrick McGrady](#), [Patriots](#), [Politics](#), [Republican](#), [Republican Central Committee](#), [robert willick](#), [senate](#), [slate](#), [Stable Revolution consulting](#), [Ted Patterson](#)

## ***4 Responses to Dan Bongino Backs 'Liberty' Candidate for Cecil County Council, Past Backers Protest; Slates Heat Up County GOP Committee Contest***

- See more at: <http://ceciltimes.com/2014/06/dan-bongino-backs-liberty-candidate-for-cecil-county-council-as-past-backers-protest-slates-heat-up-county-gop-committee-contest/#sthash.sxgwJLM0.dpuf>