



Wednesday, August 12, 2009

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To the Members of the Democratic Change Commission:

First, and foremost, on behalf of the Democratic National Committee's Youth Coordinating Council, we want to thank you for the work you are doing to improve the presidential nominating process.

Officers

Jason Rae, Co-Chair
Amber Goodwin, Co-Chair
Nick Hanek, Secretary
A'shanti Fayshel Gholar, Director

The Democratic National Committee's Youth Coordinating Council (Youth Council) was formally constituted as a council of the DNC in December 2005. The goal of the Youth Council is to increase opportunities and improve participation by young people, under age 36, in the activities and structure at all levels of the Democratic Party. We are the officially sanctioned arm of the Democratic Party that brings together all youth groups.

Members

Jamarr Brown (CDA, South Carolina)
Maria Chappelle-Nadal (Missouri)
Rick Cofer (Texas)
Francisco Domenech (YDA, Puerto Rico)
Daela Gibson (Nevada)
Phillip Gilfus (North Carolina)
Anthony Graves (Colorado)
Stephanie Hausner (YDA, New York)
Michael Kiernan (Iowa)
Katie Naranjo (CDA, Texas)
Hon. Bakari Sellers (South Carolina)
Crystal Strait (YDA, California)
Mike Tate (Wisconsin)
Thomas Bates (West)
Kevin Bondelli (West)
Mike Connery (East)
Veronica De La Garza (South)
Patrick Grayson (South)
Rafael Noboa (West)
Shaunica Pridgen (Midwest)
Edgar Santana (East)
Vanessa Sievers (East)

Young voters played a pivotal role in this past year's election. Currently, young people make up 22 percent of the overall eligible electorate and by 2010 will constitute 30 percent. Young voters are an important demographic that cannot be neglected.

Of the three tenets of the nominating process you are charged with examining, we specifically wanted to write regarding the schedule for primaries and caucuses.

We urge you to support a window that starts late enough in the year to allow students to fully participate. In 2008, the Iowa caucuses were held at such an early date (January 3) that many students were still away on the winter break and unable to participate in our party's first nominating contest. It is extremely important that young people have a say in future nominating caucuses and having a date that directly conflicts with academic calendars prohibits that input. We hope that consideration will be given to when classes would generally begin for the spring semester and that any nominating events would happen after such date.

In addition to the start date of the caucuses, Saturday caucuses also have put young people at a disadvantage. Many young people, particularly those who are full-time students and those with part-time jobs, work on the weekends and are thus unable to have a voice in the process. We hope the issue of Saturday caucuses will be given more consideration.

We would be happy to talk with you more about ways to improve the nominating process in order to provide more opportunities for young people to participate. Together, we believe will be able to build on the successes of 2008 and make sure that young people remain a valuable part of our party.

Democratically yours,

Handwritten signature of Jason Rae in black ink.

Jason Rae
Co-Chair

Handwritten signature of Amber Goodwin in black ink.

Amber Goodwin
Co-Chair

Handwritten signature of Nick Hanek in black ink.

Nick Hanek
Secretary