

Questions for the DNC Chair Candidates - 2017
From Democrats Abroad

1) Why are you running for DNC Chair?

I believe this is a “where were you” moment – because we’re in a battle not just for our party, but for the heart and soul of our nation. I’ve jumped into this race because I believe a progressive, well-managed Democratic Party is indispensable to making sure our nation’s promise of inclusion and opportunity is a reality for everyone. And given what happened on November 8th, I believe the Chair of the Democratic Party is more important now than ever before.

We need a DNC Chair that’s going to fight for our progressive values, provide leadership and strong management of a complex organization, and get results. We need a leader who will strengthen our party from the ground up, who can speak to all stakeholders, engaging and empowering Democrats at every level in all 57 states, territories and Democrats Abroad to fight for liberty, equality, justice, and opportunity. We need a leader who can go toe-to-toe with Donald Trump, offering a positive, inclusive vision of economic opportunity for all. And we need a leader who will fight to make every vote count, battling unfair and unjust voting laws and making sure every democrat across the globe has the opportunity to make their voice heard.

But most of all, our party needs a leader who will listen. We need to listen to Democrats at every level, in every place. We must empower them to fight for progressive values and a vision of optimism and opportunity. And we need to listen to voters, up and down the ballot, who overwhelmingly share our values but sent a clear message in November that we need to do a better job of communicating them.

I want to be that leader for our party. I’m a proud progressive democrat who’s spent my life getting things done, from working with Ted Kennedy to serving as the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights and Secretary of Labor for President Obama. I’ve been standing up for what we believe in my entire career, and I’m running for Chair because I know, in the years ahead, we must strengthen our team, and our bench, from the ground up. And we must stand up to protect President Obama’s progressive accomplishments from Trump.

Together, we will build the party every Democrat – and every American – deserves.

2) How would you describe your management style? What is your relevant organizational management experience? Would you work as a full time or part time Chair, and if part time, how would you manage?

From my time as President of the Board of Casa de Maryland, an immigrant rights advocacy organization that was started in the basement of a church, to leading the Civil Rights Division at the Justice Department and running the Department of Labor as Secretary, I've learned the best leaders listen first and act second. That's how I've managed the organizations I've been privileged to run and that's how I'd manage the DNC. Because for too long, the national party has taken a "ready, fire, aim" approach to our relationships with local parties and – simply put – that has to change. We have to lead from the ground up and listen to our local parties and voters to speak with one voice, united as a party.

Right now, our party faces serious and systemic challenges. That's why we need a full-time chair who knows how to manage complex organizations with a national footprint. At the Civil Rights Division, I took over an office that had been gutted by the Bush Administration. We revitalized the crown jewel of the Justice Department, setting records for opening investigations into police and sheriff departments' conduct; we challenged unfair and unjust voting laws in states like Texas and South Carolina; we stood up to rogue sheriffs who wanted to attack immigrants and tear families apart in states like Arizona and we vigorously prosecuted hate crimes across the country.

At the Labor Department, I manage an organization with over 16,000 employees and offices in every state and three territories. It's a large, complex organization with both a national footprint and regional satellites, much like the Democratic Party. We've gone from being second-to-last on the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government list for big agencies to now ranking in the top third - all of that in just a few years. And we've improved markedly each and every year.

3) Do you think the position should be filled by a single Chair or by two Co-Chairs, as has sometimes been done in the past?

Our party has to stand up and fight with one unified voice, with one full-time chair who can inspire people, grow our party, and speak to its broad tent. Just as important, we need a chair with the leadership and management experience to turn around the DNC, protect the progress we've made, and keep our party and our country moving forward. But the work and leadership is not just done by the Chair – it's the entire team, from each and every State Party Chair and Democrats Abroad - to the Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Chairs, Finance Chair, Executive

Director and staff that must be seamlessly aligned around our mission to rebuild the party from the grassroots.

4) What lessons should we learn from the 2016 elections and what do they mean for our strategy going forward? How are we going to attract voters who did not turn out for Democrats in 2016?

As a Party, we've got to get back to basics – organizing year-round in all 57 states, territories and Democrats Abroad, not just in election years; fighting for our values and sharing our message with every single voter in every single zip code; and growing our party from the grassroots up. All of that will require greater resources for state and other parties, and better listening from the DNC to your needs. When we listen to our voters, empower our local parties, and use data and good old-fashioned organizing to deliver our message of opportunity effectively, Democrats win.

The Democratic Party has always been a big tent, the party that has a place for everyone and fights for what's right. Our voters – those who were with us last election and those who weren't – want us to listen and stand behind them, to fight for our values with an alternative, optimistic vision. And our vision starts with returning to our roots and focusing on our message of rebuilding the pillars of the middle class with: a job that provides dignity and pays a decent wage; an education that opens doors of opportunity; a path to a secure retirement; and access to affordable healthcare and housing for every family.

By supporting and empowering our local parties, investing and sustaining our organizing infrastructure year-round to reach voters in every zip code, and fighting for our values and sharing our message, we can move our party forward without leaving our voters behind. And every vote counts, from the English teacher in Chengdu to the iron worker in Cincinnati. In 2016, we made the mistake of taking the democratic vote in smaller and more rural communities for granted. We did not organize and ask those voters for their support like we'd done in the past, and in places like Wisconsin, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida, neglecting those voters made all the difference. We can't let that happen again.

5) What changes should be made at the DNC to make it a more effective organization?

I've been talking with party leaders, stakeholders, voters and democrats across the country, listening to suggestions and hearing ideas about what to do differently. And I want to continue those conversations to ensure we make the right changes to get the right results.

But I want to share a few thoughts and ideas I've had from those initial conversations. I believe the DNC needs to fight unjust and unfair voter suppression laws in every state, every year. With Republicans in control, we can only expect that efforts to disenfranchise voters will only increase. That's why I want a robust Voter Empowerment Office, staffed by a team of legal experts operating year round, integrated with our regional, organizing and digital staff. One of the responsibilities of the Director of Voter Empowerment would be to have a working group of Democrats Abroad to listen and act on the challenges faced by our voters scattered throughout the globe. From fully enforcing the MOVE Act to combating recurring issues like voters abroad being prematurely dropped from voting rolls, the Voter Empowerment Director would develop and implement strategies to make it easier for all voters to cast their ballot.

And we have to do a better job supporting and training our state parties and groups in approaches and tactics that work. I'll start a Best Practices Institute to do just that - share the best solutions to our common challenges. This past election also showed us how significant the DNC's challenges are in cybersecurity. We must combat that issue and invest in solving it, not just at the national level, but also with our state parties and groups. They might have come in the front door this cycle, but democrats have 57 windows we have to help close.

One thing is clear – we have to listen to, invest in, and empower our state parties. For too long, the DNC has brought a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach to our local parties, and that does not work. We have to partner with our parties to build a bench of Democrats ready to run for office from school board to Senate and a strategy that supports all 50 states, the District of Columbia, territories and Democrats Abroad to ensure we reach Democrats wherever they are.

6) Democrats Abroad members vote in all 50 states. What are your views on implementing a 50-State Strategy? What role do you see for Democrats Abroad?

Zip code should never determine your destiny in this country. And similarly, no matter where they live every American should hear our message of inclusion and opportunity. We need to listen and talk to voters year-round, with state parties driving that conversation – and we need to build our bench and find candidates who will stand up for our values in every zip code. To do this, we will invest in state parties to help support candidates from school board to Senate, build a deep bench of Democrats ready to run and provide national and regional candidate

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training, and put states first by listening and empowering state parties to drive the DNC's national work.

Democrats Abroad is key part of this every zip code approach. With over 8 million American voters living overseas, DA plays a critical role finding and turning out the democrats wherever they are, keeping them informed with events including Town Halls, and ensuring that engagement turns into votes back home. And that role makes a difference in close races with tight margins - just look at New Hampshire, or ask now-Senators Al Franken and Jon Tester.

While DA is a key part of making sure votes from abroad happen, we must continue to make sure the MOVE Act is enforced so those votes count. I was on the frontlines of the MOVE Act and know the importance of enforcing every election, in every state, so every ballot makes it the voter and back. DA's organizing and outreach this past election cycle made a significant difference in many states, and it's time to build on that success, make sure our votes from around the globe count and invest and support DA's role in our party.

7) **Concerning Democrats Abroad (DA):**

- **How would you plan to include Democrats Abroad in the DNC's resource allocations in future election cycles?** I'd work with Democrats Abroad to ensure fair funding to support the unique nature of DA's mission and organization. Together, we will determine what is needed moving forward to effectively assist DA, making sure our voters outside the US have an impact.
- **Would you ensure that DA is allocated funding (like other state parties) under the State Party Program (SPP) to use for an Executive Director as well as Communications and GOTV initiatives abroad?** Democrats Abroad has played an important role in our Party. That has to continue in the future, with the funding needed to help Americans abroad have a voice. Just like state parties, DA needs support to be a year-round organizing and outreach group, finding voters wherever they are and making sure they participate in the process.
- **Would you agree to designate a point person within the DNC for Democrats Abroad, allowing us easy and effective interface with the Party?** I would – every party deserves a clear voice and path to ensure their input is heard within the DNC, including Democrats Abroad. Listening to our state parties and groups, those on the front lines of organizing and outreach, is a critical part of our party's success moving forward.

8) Like voters in all states, Democrats Abroad members have concerns specific to overseas Americans. What is the best medium for state parties like us to raise these issues within the Democratic Party and see them addressed?

We have to partner with and support all 50 states, the District of Columbia, territories and Democrats Abroad. And a partnership means listening to all voices, maintaining an ongoing conversation and creating open, clear paths for communication. If I'm privileged to be Chair, I will always personally listen to our parties and advocate for DA. Organizing everywhere makes a difference, and DA has an incredible challenge of doing that across the globe. Your role is unique and your voice within the DNC will be heard.

9) What other remarks would you like to make to Democrats Abroad?

I'm running for Chair as a proud progressive democrat with a history of getting things done, managing complex organizations and delivering impactful results. From standing up to states discriminating against voters to fighting for working families, I've been moving our values forward my entire career. And I'm ready to lead the DNC into our next chapter.

I know this isn't going to be easy – the next four years are going to be a battle. But it's time to stop fretting and start fighting. It's time to stand up for our values and organize, to invest and empower our state parties to run candidates from school board to senate, to ensure every voter in every zip code hears our message. If we have a DNC chair who listens in order to lead, who will strengthen our party from the ground up, engaging and empowering Democrats at every level in all 57 states and territories to fight for liberty, equality, justice, and opportunity, I know we will succeed. And together, we will build the party every Democrat – and every American – deserves.