



Questions for the DNC Chair Candidates - 2017
From Democrats Abroad

1) Why are you running for DNC Chair?

Like many Democrats, I woke up the day after the election frustrated by the lack of participation in our electoral process by so many Americans. I knew it wasn't time to mourn, but to organize. Democrats win when we empower the grassroots and fight for the issues that improve people's lives. This election cycle, Democrats failed to motivate enough people to show up at the ballot box. Since 2008, Democrats have lost some 935 legislative seats and Republicans now control two thirds of governors' offices. In 2014 we saw a close to seventy-year low in turnout. I believe that empowering the grassroots will help us win back races from the school board and city hall to the White House.

Since I threw my hat in the ring a few weeks ago for the Chair of the Democratic National Committee, I have had the privilege, pleasure, and benefit of listening to a great many party activists, including folks with long years of service and those brand new to the party. I have learned one thing: Democrats are ready for a massive come back.

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?

Whoever wins the DNC chair race faces a lot of work, travel, planning and resource raising. I have decided to resign as a member of Congress if I win the election for DNC chair. I will be 'all-in' to meet the challenge.

My management style is similar to my belief in politics: inclusion. We have a robust and diverse set of experiences ready and able to assist in the work of the DNC. From Vice Chairs and DNC Members to our party chairs and Democrats Abroad - we have a deep and rich talent base to develop the infrastructure, plan and opportunities to win.

I plan to recruit a diverse and experienced staff that is committed to a vision where 3,143 counties are put at the forefront of the agenda. Staff who are organizers and dedicated to working with and for our great party apparatus.

I am excited to work with you to set the vision of this party and help guide the ship. But it will take all of us, together, to get our party going in the direction we need for working Americans.

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?

I believe one chair dedicated to collaborating with our DNC members, state party chairs and Democrats Abroad will be critical to strengthening our party.

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?

We must energize Democratic activists across the country and give them the tools to build the Party from the bottom up. Beyond a 50-state strategy, we need a 3,143-county strategy. DNC members are on the front lines in these states and counties, and we must harness your experience and give you a meaningful voice as we set the direction for the Party. In a DNC Chair, you need a partner and an advocate who will ensure you have the resources you need to win.

We must also reclaim our history as the Party that stands with working people. We can start with our platform — the most progressive in history — which calls for a living wage, requiring the wealthy and corporations to pay their fair share, and comprehensive immigration reform. We will never stop fighting attempts by the Trump White House, Republican-controlled states, and special interests to roll back affordable health care, worker wages and protections, and a woman’s right to choose. We will stand up for people of all races, religions, genders and sexual orientations to foster a more inclusive, fair society and create an economy that works for all Americans.

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

I hope to have an engaging conversation on this question with Democrats Abroad on our call. I have spent a lot of time talking to Democrats across the country about what they hope and need in our party. The start of my thoughts on that conversation can be found at: keithfordnc.org/platform.

The key shift that we need is to take our party back into neighbor-to-neighbor organizing based around our values. We can’t be a party based and almost exclusively staffed in Washington DC. We need to build permanent and lasting infrastructure in states. Giving state parties the capacity to weather the storm, to organize Democrats in their state and to win elections.

The DNC also needs to better partner and collaborate with a whole host of organizations like: other national committees, Young and College Democrats, Democrats Abroad, and our caucuses and councils. Fostering this collaboration will help boost turnout, engage voters in meaningful ways and build partnerships that last.

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?

As noted above, I don't believe we need just a 50-state strategy, we need a 3,143 county strategy. That means increasing SPP, collaboration on fundraising and fundraising lists, staff on the ground in each state provided by the DNC and building programs that last no matter what candidate is running for President or what Democrat is in the White House.

Democrats Abroad are crucial in our fights in almost every state. The margin of victory - when you look at 100,000 votes in three states that could have swung the election - could potentially be resolved by our Democrats residing abroad. My hope is that the Democrats Abroad team is interconnected with the staff of the DNC and me to make sure the resources needed for successful programs are raised and executed properly. I would love to talk more specifically on our call about what Democrats Abroad has in mind and I am dedicated to my office engaging in - at a minimum - monthly calls with our Democrats Abroad leadership.

7) Concerning Democrats Abroad (DA):

- How would you plan to include Democrats Abroad in the DNC's resource allocations in future election cycles?
- 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?
- Would you agree to designate a point person within the DNC for Democrats Abroad, allowing us easy and effective interface with the Party?

Absolutely. This shouldn't even have to be a question. Our Democrats Abroad should be engaged with and funded in the same way as all state parties. In fact, Democrats Abroad represents more Democrats than some of our state parties.

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?

Constant communication. The next DNC chair and their office should be in regular communication with Democrats Abroad so we understand the vital and important issues that are happening. I also believe that when Democrats Abroad leadership is stateside we should regularly be meeting in person to catch up on what the DNC is doing and what we can do to strengthen our partnership.

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

I am excited to have a conversation with you. However, I don't want that to be the start and the end. Our work - winning back our country - is going to take a constant partnership between the DNC and Democrats Abroad. We need to make sure we are engaging our Democrats Abroad in all elections - not just Presidential and we need to find ways to make it easier to communicate and protect access to the ballot.