



Questions for the DNC Chair Candidates - 2017  
From Democrats Abroad

1) Why are you running for DNC Vice-Chair?

I'm running for Vice-Chair because I believe to be successful in every election cycle the DNC must build our bench, strengthen our party and embrace the future. As a local elected official, I know the importance of ensuring our message and our organizing are synchronized.

Democrats win when with a clear progressive message that resonates with voters. Democrats win when we treat every election – not just Presidential as important. Democrats win when we give voters a clear choice. Democrats win when we celebrate and embrace our diversity with a continual focus on constituency vote programs, especially among communities of color, millennials, LGBT, senior, working American, and women and so on. We are the party that speaks for America.

I offer my track record of successful organizing, coalition-building and experiences in winning local races throughout the country to help serve our Party at this critical time of transition.

If elected, I will work with our National Party Chair and focus my energy on efforts to recruit the best candidates for elections up and down the ballot – and in every election cycle, raising resources to build the party from the ground up by fortifying state parties in the 50 states and US territories.

We must build the base with a focus on winning local races at the city, county and state levels to ensure Democrats have a seat at the table for critical policy decisions, especially as we prepare for the 2020 Census and the redrawing of legislative district lines. Our pathway back to national success must have at its foundation success in races for City Hall, State Legislatures and Governor's Mansions.

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? *N/A for Vice Chair Role*

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I believe the best managers are coaches, who train and empower staff to facilitate performance. I've had the privilege of managing many great teams throughout my career. On the 2008 Obama campaign, I served as Deputy Political Director and Constituency Outreach Director in Iowa and Deputy Director and Political Director in Michigan which meant it was job to organize important constituency groups involved with the campaign, for example - labor, communities of color, college students, etc. That meant I had to build trust with organizations and leaders who represented these communities which required open and honest communication. I believe any good manager must have strong communication skills, it's what I used as a director in the White House, as an Assemblymember and now as I run my campaign for the DNC Vice-Chair position.

- 2) 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?

This is a decision DNC members will ultimately have to make, however I support the structure outlined in the DNC Bylaws – One National Chair and 5 Vice Chairs, in addition to the other elected officers (Treasurer, National Finance Chair and Treasurer).

I feel right now the Party is in rebuild mode – not panic mode. We need all hands on deck. We need a Chair that will spend all of her/his available time shaping national dialog and raising resources with the assistance of the national officers. I believe one of the most critical functions of the national officers is to ensure proper resources to hire the most credentialed and engaged staff possible to run day-to-day operations. The next chair must be able to hold fundraising events for state parties and the national party.

If I am fortunate enough to earn the votes of DNC members, I will specifically commit my efforts to helping raise resources at a local and national level and helping to find and empower the next generation of leaders.

- 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?

I actually want to reflect on elections in 2010, 2014 and 2016. The DNC has to stop being an every 4 year party. That's why I've

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stressed my platform of building the base, strengthening the Party and embracing the future. We have to make sure our state and territorial parties are strong and able to lead in races for city, county and state elections.

Reflecting on the 2016 Presidential election specifically, verified a few things. First, Every vote counts – the margins in some battleground states was extremely close at the state wide level, which equates to a few voters per precinct at the county level. We have to fight for every vote in the states, and Democrats Abroad is uniquely positioned to ensure Americans living in other countries are registered and able to cast ballots. Second, the DNC must continuously mobilize and organize among democratic base voters: working Americans, communities of color, millennials, LGBTQ, Latinos, Asian Americans and women and other groups with a consistent economic message for all communities regardless of zip code. Third, GOTV operations are important. We need to ensure voters don't take any election for granted, whether voting for School Board President, or President of the United States. We have to turn out our base. Proper preparation prevents poor performance and so we have to prepare and we have to recruit and we have to train and we have to mobilize and we have to organize.

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

As mentioned, the DNC needs to shift the operational paradigm; our foundation has to be constructed of strong, self-sustaining State Democratic Parties to lead cultivation of talent to strengthen the base and make sure issues resonate at the local level. This means a greater investment in state parties, with the National Party's role providing capacity building and research.

At the national level, the DNC should focus on rapid response to hold the Trump administration accountable and get resources to state parties to win elections.

The DNC needs a strong national public engagement team to help develop and share best practices in community and political organizing strategies across the states.

6) Democrats Abroad members vote in all 50 states. What are your views on

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implementing a 50-State Strategy? What role do you see for Democrats Abroad?

We know elections are close. In the 2008 election, President Obama won North Carolina by 3 votes per precinct. In 2016, the margin was just as close for Secretary Clinton in some Wisconsin precincts. Every vote counts. As a result, the DNC must invest in our state and territorial parties to help Democrats win elections up and down the ballot. I would work with the National Chair and propose and enhance SPP program that moves away from treating all states and all races alike. The cookie cutter model doesn't work.

Instead I propose all states receiving a baseline allocation from the DNC to help sustain and support programmatic and fundraising infrastructure. But some states need additional help so I proposal an enhanced capacity assistance program of limited additional support to build parity. The additional support would help state parties fortify fundraising apparatus and help them sustain. The DNC can't fully fund any state party – but we can fully fund programs to make state parties successful.

Democrats who live abroad can make the difference in elections – all elections – especially local elections where turn out is often very low. The DNC should have a strong program to engage Democrats living abroad, by both ensuring state parties have a strong relationship with DA and by ensuring DA is part of our public engagement strategy with staff helping to organize.

I know we've tried this before, an Executive Director housed at the DNC who helps facilitate organizing in the various countries. I would proposed to take best practices and working with the Dems Abroad and the National Chair figure out the best path forward.

7) Concerning Democrats Abroad (DA):

How would you plan to include Democrats Abroad in the DNC's resource allocations in future election cycles?

- I would advocate for Dems Abroad engagement in a couple of ways. First, DNC staff working with state parties to ensure voter contact and GOTV resources from state operations includes engaging overseas voters where applicable. Second, I would support a public engagement model that provides

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resources to Dems Abroad for mobilizing, registering and organizing overseas voters, to ensure they are aware of election law and deadlines. DNC staff should facilitate this relationship.

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?

- I would advocate for Dems Abroad receiving its own allocation of resources for mobilizing, organizing and registering overseas voters as part of the DNC's public engagement strategy. I would advocate for Dems Abroad to have its own unique financial and organizational relationship with the DNC, and not necessarily the SPP program, which in my opinion is also due for an overhaul.

Would you agree to designate a point person within the DNC for Democrats Abroad, allowing us easy and effective interface with the Party?

- Absolutely. Working with the National Chair, I want to advocate for changing the way we think about what's currently called "constituency" and change it to public engagement. The DNC must have a unique public engagement program for Dems Abroad – I don't think we can or should think in terms of what's in place now or what's been done before. I foresee a member of the Public Engagement staff working directly with Dems Abroad leadership on organizing and training.

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?

I agree, and consistent with my pledge of not attempting to force a "cookie cutter" approach to organizing, as Vice Chair I would advocate that Dems Abroad have resources to make this determination. The challenges preventing overseas Americans from voters differ from country to country; what works and the issues in Mexico are different than the United Kingdom and so on and so on.

I would support Dems Abroad leadership and member organization in

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determining the challenges, and I would be your advocate supporting recommendations from DA to the DNC.

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

Build our bench. Strengthen our party. Embrace our future. It sounds simple. But believe me, the only way we'll get there is by putting in the hard work.

That work started on November 9<sup>th</sup> and continues today.

Because remember, the direction of our country isn't set in stone after one election every four years. No – each of us charts our country's course in small ways every single day. We do it every second we take a stand. Every minute we stay involved. Every moment we work on behalf of our neighbors, our families and our communities.

We're the party that moves forward, not backward. That's why we won't be defined by what happened on November 8 – but by what happened on November 9. Not by a punch to the gut, but by our determination to punch back.

I humbly ask for your support, because I'm ready to fight. But I can't do it alone. None of us can. That's why our first instinct as Democrats, even on a dark, divisive day this past November, was to reach out and come together. Let's keep up that momentum. Let's stay united. With your help, with our resolve, we can chart a new course for our party, our people and our future.