

ED SCHWARTZ – CHAIR CANDIDATE

The LDS community is key to winning elections for the Democratic Party. I have been speaking about the framing of our messaging throughout this campaign and understand and accept the fact that we will not agree on every issue. I strongly believe that we are in agreement on most issues but the lack of proper conversation training and our lack of vision and advocacy from the party leadership has continued to stall the much needed energy in this area.

I am the only candidate who has continually advocated to open a small regional office in Utah County. For too long our party has turned its back to Utah County and this important region. If we are unable to reframe our messaging in Utah County and attract the Non-Affiliated voters then we will continue along the same line. Its like the definition of insanity, "keep doing the same thing over and over again and expect different results."

As a leader I am willing to take the proper calculated risks to ensure that our messaging is properly framed and that our field operatives receive the proper conversation training when conducting their Deep Canvassing throughout our state. Additionally I have advocated continuously for a 24 hour media response (SWAT) Team to educate the Non-Affiliated voters about the lies being promoted by the Republicans. I will work with social media experts to ensure that this occurs as it will be a vital component in organizing the LDS community to work and vote with the Democrats.

Voting is emotional and at times considered a chore. As I have stated throughout my campaign, I strongly believe that our LDS community is much more aligned with our issues than the other party. This is about reframing our messaging and creating the correct conversation template combined with conversation training for our field operation, I believe that all roads lead to yes.

The caucus is key in guiding the creation of a conversation template and developing the proper conversation guideline for our field operation. If I have the honor of being elected I will work with the LDS Caucus to ensure that our state wide training materials are the best, work with the caucus to develop and deliver statewide video field trainings for Chairs and precinct organizers.

NADIA BOWMAN – CHAIR CANDIDATE

A large part of my campaign has been about valuing our diversity, which includes making space for both LDS and non LDS people. To get more LDS voters to be active in the party, we have to remind people that there's more than one way to be a Democrat, and that's ok! I don't believe in purity tests and will happily support a Democrat who I don't 100% agree with on every issue. The party also has to have some/more events that don't center around alcohol, that aren't on Sundays or Monday nights, and are family friendly or even have on-site child care (that last one will bring in more than just LDS voters). Finally, we have to make sure that the language the party uses does not disparage the LDS church or its members, even when we think the line between church and state has been blurred.

Drawing in more LDS voters starts by having more LDS people active in the party, as discussed above. LDS voters are the largest voting block in Utah (and LDS people turn out to vote in great numbers) so it's vital that Democrats win over LDS voters in order to win for most races. The LDS talking points and training the caucus has done is extremely useful, and has been underutilized. I'd like to include parts of that training (including written documents) given to all those considering running for office (I've also campaigned on a comprehensive manual for candidates, so this information would go there). I would also continue to provide any support the LDS caucus (and any other caucus) needs to be effective at reaching out to their community and getting those members to vote Democrat.

I'd like the caucus to continue its outreach to LDS voters. I'd also like to have more people take advantage of the caucus's trainings. The party should work in conjunction with caucus leadership to make sure the incredibly helpful information your caucus has is available and used by all Utah Democrats.

JULIANNE WATERS – CHAIR CANDIDATE

We need to learn how to message our issues and values so that LDS people can hear us. I believe we all have 'trigger words' based on our upbringing and culture. Discussing "environmental issues" can be challenging, while discussing 'stewardship' suddenly resonates with LDS people. As a party, we need to work on our messaging so that we will be heard. With over 500,000 unaffiliated voters in Utah, we must realize that there are a LOT of LDS people who are not happy with the label GOP. If we can reach them and share our Democratic values, we can give them a political home to come to!

DAISY THOMAS- CHAIR CANDIDATE

I believe we should be speaking to the priorities of families and communities as the foundation of our society. We, as a party and as a people, should be willing to be educated by LDS voters on community organizing. We need to reclaim our narrative because we are the party that stands for strengthening the whole community. As a wife and mom, I want to make sure that more of our events and trainings are family friendly so anyone who wishes to participate has that option, and especially given the political climate we are in, that we are much more tolerant and respectful of all members of our democratic family and beyond.

Again, when we speak openly and honestly to the issues that affect everyday Utah families and communities, we will be much more approachable as democrats. By working with our LDS Dems caucus leaders and others within the community, we can broaden our scope to make sure everyone feels like they are welcome in our party and can comfortably support the candidates we run.

Teach us how to better organize! More outreach to other caucuses, statewide, discussing strategies that have worked and what hasn't. Joining forces on things like voter registration or other types of trainings and working with candidates, staff, and volunteers on targeted messaging will help build a stronger party, stronger candidates, and stronger voter turnout.

MARCUS STEVENSON- VICE CHAIR CANDIDATE

Here in Utah, Trump won with the lowest margins out of any other state. Many voters were looking for a different candidate to vote for and our party must be open and actively working to bring in these disenfranchised individuals. Our candidates, county parties, and state party must be actively listening, learning, and implementing new ways to activate LDS voters within our party.

I've been lucky to work for a couple of the most prominent LDS Democrats in the state including, Ben McAdams and Steve Olsen. Our party needs to be better utilizing the LDS Democrats Caucus as well as these individuals who have proven they know how to message correctly to LDS voters. As Vice-Chair, I'll be looking to the experts on these issues on how to message in order to create a more welcoming Democratic Party.

LDS Democrats are probably the most organized caucus that the party has, so I can't say I have many critiques. The next caucus Chair will have big shoes to fill and I'm excited to see Crystal serving on the Executive Committee, so Utah Democrats can start winning more elections.

JOSIE VALDEZ- VICE-CHAIR CANDIDATE

It is imperative that our State Party develop a message which appeals to LDS voters. We must re-brand ourselves as the Party of compassion, the Party of service to the poor, the Party of loving our neighbor.

We must develop a message that reminds Utahns that Democrats embrace the basic principles taught by Jesus: Love one another//give to the poor//the widow's mite, etc.

We must embrace language (LDS Speak) that is not offensive and more inclusive of LDS values, i.e., instead of saying US Government - say America

Say neighbor - instead of citizen

Say shared responsibility - instead of programs

Use the word stewardship

Bring our values back to free agency, family and self-reliance

We must continually remind everyone that the LDS Church is neutral when it comes to politics. We must remind voters that our platform and philosophies are consistent with gospel principles. We must remind members that church facilities and meetings should not be used for political purposes are discussion. We must work to make LDS members feel welcomed in all our Party events.

When the Party identifies issues such as the Economy, Education, the Environment...etc., we must use language which appeals to LDS voters. Examples:

Economy - We support policies which create a strong economy, enabling strong, self-reliant families. Once we reach self-reliance, we must help those who cannot help themselves.

Education - Reforming Utah's education system is essential to leading students toward self-reliance. ("The glory of God is intelligence".)

Environment - We must be stewards of the earth. We support policies which use energy wisely. We seek to create a cleaner world.

Caring for the environment is a sign of respect for the Earth, God and our children.

MARGARITA SATINI – VICE CHAIR CANDIDATE

Even though I grew up LDS, this is something I'd STILL want to sit down and work with the LDS Dems caucus on. My experience with the LDS church has always been with a Pacific Islander lens and we are a very inclusive people, but I also carry with me the shared stories from many of my LDS families with LGBTQ children, relatives, and friends. Stories from other LDS members of many other communities of color. These are communities that I have spent many years creating relationships with. What's worked for me on that front is commitment to improved outreach efforts, this means something as simple as meet and greets, LDS Democratic meet ups, get-togethers to talk about current issues, etc. These activities have a way of building bridges, strengthening relationships, and establishing trust. We also need to create a message that is inclusive and resonates not only with the base, but transcends party lines, this includes LDS Dems.

One of the most effective ways of convincing anyone outside of the democratic party to vote democrat (including LDS) is making sure that we have a viable, strong, smart, likable candidate, even finding candidates that are LDS dems, and arming them with a strong but simple message and knocking on those doors, and preparing ourselves to have those crucial, voter persuasion conversations. Perfect example, Representative Carol Spackman-Moss is a democrat and LDS and many of the people that go to the same ward with her are republicans. Representative Spackman-Moss has successfully established strong, positive relationships with the republican members of her ward. They've seen the good work that she has done and they continue to support and vote for her. It's those types of relationships that we need to build, that we need to cultivate, establish, and maintain.

Outreach to the LDS Members from the various communities of color and vulnerable communities needs to be strengthened. We have a large LDS membership within our vulnerable communities, and they are not being talked too by our Democratic party. Our outreach isn't being done because of the stereotype that "ALL LDS members are republicans." Remember NOT all Republicans are LDS and NOT all LDS members are republicans. We won't know what we're working with if we don't roll up our sleeves, pull up our bootstraps, and start having those conversations. We won't even know if these conversations are difficult until we have them. You may find yourself face to face with an LDS like-minded individual. We will never know until we try.

SUMMER RASMUSSEN – VICE CHAIR CANDIDATE

Our Party has an obvious "branding" issue. Having worked in marketing and branding since I received my Graphic Communications degree in 2010, I know how to help improve our message in a way that will speak to LDS voters across Utah. The main way that I think this can be accomplished is by showing that our values as Democrats are so often aligned with LDS values. The one-sheet that your caucus has created outlines your messaging and the issues that LDS Dems care most about and I would compare that with the UDP Party Platform which we will be voting on at State Convention. So many of those values are the exact same values! I have spoken a lot about providing outreach materials (fliers, phone/door-knocking scripts, etc) on our website that any Democrat can use to encourage the public to register and vote Democrat and I would love to work closely with the LDS Dems Caucus leadership to ensure that those materials and the overall message of our Party speak effectively to LDS voters. I also want to show that UDP leadership is willing to work across the aisle to help push forward legislative measures that we all know will improve life in Utah.

I believe that this comes down to carefully selecting, training, and supporting quality candidates. This is why it's so important that delegates are present at Party conventions. The LDS Dems Caucus is one of our biggest and strongest and when LDS delegates show up, they have a huge say in which candidates receive the Democratic nomination for public offices. If elected Party Vice Chair, I would want to work closely with the LDS Caucus to help figure out why some delegates may not be present and how we can help them achieve that goal. The LDS Caucus leaders and members are the most knowledgeable when it comes to these issues, so in my eyes, it only makes sense to reach out to you for guidance. Once we, as a Party, give a candidate our nomination, I would also encourage that candidate to contact the LDS Dems Caucus directly to find out how he/she can better communicate his or her message to LDS voters.

I would like to see the LDS Dems Caucus increase their outreach to young voters and immigrants. As I am sure you are aware, there have been many reports lately showing that younger members of the LDS Church are starting to lean more and more to the "left" politically. I would love to see the LDS Dems Caucus reach out to these voters and capture that energy. I know that you already have a large presence on college and university campuses, and I would encourage that work to increase. I also think that the LDS community has a lot of work that can be done to help reach out to immigrants and refugees. Many immigrants (whether from Europe, Asia, or Colorado) come here as existing members of the LDS church and our LDS Dems Caucus could make it a priority to get them registered to vote in their new home state and let them know of any upcoming elections. Utah accepts one of the highest per-capita rates of refugees in the nation and the LDS Church has so many wonderful programs set up to help those in need. Having worked with many refugees myself, I know that some of the simplest things, such as a (Democratic LDS) neighbor reaching out and welcoming a new family to the neighborhood makes a huge difference and lets them know that, if/when they are eligible to vote, the Democratic Party is here for them.

CRISTOBAL VILLEGAS – SECRETARY CANDIDATE

Regarding the LDS voters and the role as Secretary, my duty as Secretary and the interests of LDS voters do intersect.

Take the organizational parallel between the religious construct of order and the political party construct of order. When the Democratic Party communicates effectively across all levels of participation (precincts, legislative districts, counties, etc), LDS voters can and will see the stark similarities between both institutions. Thus making the Democratic Party seem more in tune to their familiar surroundings.

Another appealing point is record keeping and reporting. The more accurate and accessible information is for the common member and the member with more responsibility, the LDS voters will be more inclined to invest (time and other resources) into the Party. After all, everyone wants to understand the status of the Party and all the moving parts in it.

The two aforementioned points were specific to the Secretary position and its limited capacity as outlined in the UDP Constitution. However, this last point is more general and applicable to the party overall.

The Party claims to be the party of the people, yet for many people, the party is the last place they'd like to hang out (figuratively and literally). Nonetheless, the Party must recognize that some portions of Utah are held by more conservative Utahns. Well, then we must canvass and outreach even more in those areas. As more conservative LDS voters understand the many points, although differing points, that many more liberal Democrats profess, respect and affinity can and will bloom. After all, the Utah County Democrats can explain the Democratic stances of certain issues to LDS voters much better than a Salt Lake County Democrat can, and the reason is the familiarity that exists in neighborhoods and such.

I can definitely talk more about this and any other questions regarding inclusivity and Utah. The issue of religious inclusion is vital to the Party and personal to me, as I was born into, grew up, and served in the LDS church and community. Let me know if there are questions or concerns!

CRYSTAL YOUNG-OTTERSTROM – TREASURER CANDIDATE

I am your only option for state party treasurer, but working my butt off is basically my middle name and I hope to earn your support through my work, not simply because I am unopposed. I am the current chair of LDS Dems - Utah and one of the three national co-chairs of LDS Dems of America. It's no secret that it is difficult to be LDS and a Democrat. Not only because our fellow Mormons question how we can be democrats, but WAY TOO MANY democrats (who are supposed to be open minded and tolerant) question how we can remain active Latter-day Saints and espouse democratic values. Of course we know that we can be both! In our six year existence, we've made a lot of progress to make the democratic party inclusive of LDS voters. The state party never hosts events on Sundays, Mondays, and only rarely at bars. Many, but not all, of the county parties have followed suit. There is still much work to be done, especially as evidenced at last year's many county and state conventions in which it was not a safe or inviting environment for mormon democrats. We have many new delegates, and they need to be educated on what LDS Dems is about and why it is important to include us in the democratic party big tent. I will continue to be an advocate for working to make the democratic party more welcoming to LDS voters. A big factor in my decision to run for an executive committee role is the fact that there has not been an elected member of the executive committee who is also practicing LDS in a very long time. It is hard to get our message of inclusion across when we don't have a seat at the table. I will always be that voice for us.

This is the constant work of LDS Dems since we founded in 2011! It's time to get real about persuasion. Mormons may only be 60% of Utah, but we are 70-80% of registered voters, and likely an even higher percentage of active voters. Even in the democratic party, in which we feel too often like a persecuted minority, we are still the largest caucus and largest percentage of delegates. When we show up for convention, our voice is heard. When we don't, then of course they don't care about us. There is no possible voting math that can exclude targeting LDS voters in the majority of races. The fact that we only hold 13 seats in the state legislature is a reflection of the fact that those are largely 13 safe dem seats that don't need to think about LDS voters and persuasion. If we want to actually win seats, if we want to pick up the 6 state senate seats and 13 state house seats that are necessary to win by 2021 in order to have a say in redistricting, we MUST, as a party, get real about persuading LDS voters. The LDS Dems caucus has already researched the best words in which to frame various democrat positions to be more palatable to LDS voters. It has always been our position that it isn't necessarily about moderating positions (although that never hurts in Utah!), it's about using the best words. We teach candidates to talk about how democratic policies strengthen families, are moral positions, and create self-sufficiency. I.e. with refugees we might say, "It is the moral thing to do to welcome refugees into our country. Being more compassionate towards refugees also strengthens families because it keeps them together and brings them somewhere safe."

In addition to our trainings and messaging guides for candidates, I'd like to see real efforts and fundraising dollars go towards persuasion. We aren't winning with the conventional wisdom of activating lazy democrat voters and focusing on a small persuasion window. Candidates still need to be smart with who they target in their persuadable universe and how many voters is a realistic number for them to reach out to, but I think we can work with candidates to build real persuasion strategies on a grander scale. As treasurer, I pledge to fundraise towards that purpose (in addition to hiring staff, keeping the lights on, funding our broader party building and branding plans, etc.)

The party and the caucus is not some foreign entity that exists, succeeds, or fails outside of you. The party and the caucus, both, succeed or fail because of what we all AND YOU put into it. We need a lot more of us to get involved in LDS Dems and the party. We need way more volunteers. We need way more helpers. Yes, the shenanigans of this chair's race are disgusting and are reaching unprecedented levels of negativity but nothing changes if we take our voices out and don't show up and do the work that needs doing. If you don't like how the party is doing something, feel empowered to do it! So that 1 thing — for me — is I'd like to see the caucus be better at recruiting volunteers and activating them not only within our organization but also within the party and it's 29 county chapters. It's time for all of us to do more.