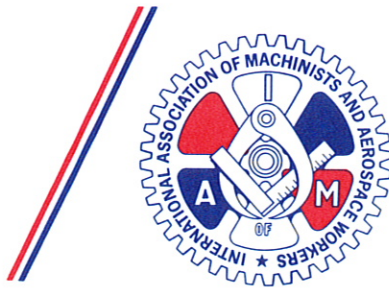


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OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

GL – 2 Communications

May 20, 2008

Subj: 2008 Presidential Campaign

The Honorable Howard Dean
Democratic National Committee
430 S. Capitol St. SE
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Chairman Dean and Members of the Rules and Bylaws Committee:

We cannot win the White House by disenfranchising 2.3 million Democratic primary voters in Michigan and Florida. That is not a casual statement. It is based on the 2004 election results and the harsh realities we, as Democrats, face in amassing 270 Electoral College votes.

Let me explain.

The Republican nominee, John McCain, starts with an historic advantage in the Mountain, Great Plains and Midwestern States. Indiana, Oklahoma, North Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho and Alaska have not voted for the Democratic ticket in the last ten presidential elections. Arizona, Utah, Montana, Kansas, Colorado, South Dakota and Nevada have gone Democratic only once or twice in the last forty years. New Mexico, while trending Democratic, has only supported our nominee three times since 1968.

If those rock-solid GOP states' voting behavior over the last ten presidential cycles is not sufficiently persuasive, then the spread between Senator John Kerry and President George Bush in 2004 should be. The 2004 Democratic nominee lost those 15 states by 2.83 million votes.

Even if you believe, as I do, that New Mexico and Nevada are eminently winnable, that leaves thirteen states with 72 electoral votes solidly in the GOP column.

The Republican nominee also has an advantage in the Southern and Border States. Virginia has not voted Democratic since the LBJ landslide. Alabama and North Carolina have gone Democratic once in the last forty years. Democrats won Texas and Florida twice in that period. And Tennessee, Missouri, Kentucky, Louisiana, Georgia and Arkansas have gone Democratic three times since 1968 and two of those wins were by the Clinton-Gore ticket.

Again, the spread between Kerry and Bush in those thirteen states only reinforces just how difficult winning the region can be. The Bush campaign wracked up a 5.56 million vote advantage over the 2004 Democratic ticket in the Southern and Border States. Our narrowest defeats came in Arkansas and Missouri, states John Kerry lost by 102,000 and 169,000 votes respectively.

Florida, alone among those thirteen Southern and Border States, has grown more competitive over the last four presidential campaign cycles. Bill Clinton lost Florida in 1992 by 100,000 votes, but won the state in 1996 by 302,000 votes. Al Gore lost it in the Supreme Court. John Kerry lost Florida by 381,000 votes.

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Excluding Florida from the mix, Senator McCain can count on 145 electoral votes from the Southern and Border States. And that brings his Electoral College tally to 217.

Michigan and Florida have 44 electoral votes. If the Democratic National Convention fails to seat their delegations and accord their delegates full voting rights, it will be more difficult to win those states.

John McCain would start the general election campaign with 261 electoral votes – nine shy of the 270 needed to win the White House.

Our Democratic nominee would be on the defensive from the moment our convention ended. He or she would have to prevent Senator McCain from winning Ohio's 20 electoral votes, Pennsylvania's 21 electors or Minnesota and Wisconsin's 20 electoral votes. He or she would have to worry about West Virginia, Iowa, New Mexico and New Hampshire and their 21 electoral votes. Meanwhile, John McCain's campaign also would be targeting Nevada, Colorado and Oregon's 22 electoral votes.

Those eleven states offer the GOP a target-rich environment. None are sure bets for either Senator Barack Obama or Senator Hillary Clinton. John Kerry lost Ohio by 118,000; Colorado by 100,000; West Virginia by 97,000; Nevada by 21,000; Iowa by 10,100; and New Mexico by 6,000. He won New Hampshire by 9,000; Wisconsin by 11,000; Oregon by 77,000; Minnesota by 99,000; and Pennsylvania by 145,000. And while Democrats must win these states, John McCain does not need to win them all, just one or two to be inaugurated.

The heightened risk of losing any of these states should give us all pause.

Our primary objective should be winning the White House with a Democratic nominee who cares about working families and the issues that affect their lives. And we cannot achieve that goal if the Florida and Michigan delegations are not seated. Your voice and vote can be decisive.

Obviously the choice is yours. But we simply cannot become the party that disenfranchises 2.3 million Democratic voters. That is the legacy of the Republican Party. We, as Democrats, must always remain true to our core principle that "every vote must count."

Sincerely,


R. Thomas Buffenbarger
International President

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