

MEMORANDUM

TO: DNC Members

FROM: Jen O'Malley Dillon, Chair & Larry Cohen, Vice Chair
Unity Reform Commission

SUBJECT: Unity Reform Commission Update

DATE: 10/30/2017

On behalf of the Unity Reform Commission, we wanted to update you on our work and progress as we review and make recommendations around our Party's nominating process.

The Unity Reform Commission was created at the 2016 Democratic National Convention through a resolution passed at the Convention Rules Committee and approved by delegates. The mandate, which can be found [here](#), specifically calls on the Commission to review recommendations on topics that include: increasing participation in the presidential nominating process with a focus on the caucus process; involving new and unaffiliated voters; revising the role of unpledged delegates; making the Democratic Party more competitive in general elections; empowering grassroots leaders and expanding the DNC's donor base.

These recommendations must be made by January 1, 2018 to the full DNC and Rules and Bylaws Committee and will ultimately presented to the full DNC.

During the recent Fall DNC Meeting, the Unity Commission held it's fourth in-person meeting. At each meeting, Commission Members have heard from Party Officials, political strategists, experts, and grassroots activists. In addition to the feedback we heard during the Officer Forums this past winter, the [online feedback from](#) DNC Members and grassroots activists, and the information discussed at our meetings have provided invaluable insight on the important topics we are tasked with evaluating.

To better tackle this important work, we have broken our work up into four areas of focus: primaries, caucuses, unpledged delegates and party reform. During the time between our in-person meetings, we have worked together in smaller Working Groups to dive deeper into these important topics. After our last meeting in Las Vegas, we feel confident that we are going to have substantial recommendations to include in our report, which directly address our four key areas of focus. Below is a recap on the Commission's mandate on each of these buckets of work.

Primaries: "...That the Unity Reform Commission shall consider and make appropriate recommendations regarding revisions to the Delegate Selection Rules for the 2020 Democratic National Convention with respect to the manner of voting used during the presidential nominating process with a goal of increasing voter participation and inclusion through grassroots engagement of the Party's voter base during and in-between presidential election cycles. The Commission shall make recommendations to encourage the expanded use of primary elections....

That the Unity Reform Commission shall make recommendations to encourage the involvement in all elections of unaffiliated or new voters who seek to join the Democratic Party including through same-day registration and re-registration.”

Caucuses: “...eligible voters’ ability to participate in the caucuses are protected. The Commission shall make recommendations as to how caucuses can be less burdensome and more inclusive, transparent and accessible to participants. Specific consideration shall be given to so-called firehouse caucuses and other methods that will permit expanded and higher volumes of voter participation. These steps shall include ensuring caucuses are well-run, accessible, transparent and that the delegates allocated to the national convention fairly reflect the will of the voters expressed during the caucuses. The Commission shall make specific recommendations to streamline the caucus realignment process, including measures to accommodate increased voter participation and decrease the time necessary to conduct the caucus. The Commission shall make specific recommendations that requires caucuses to publish the specific headcount at all caucus locations and to maintain sufficient records to make a post-caucus review and re-canvass of the results possible.”

Unpledged Delegates: “...make appropriate recommendations for revisions to the Delegate Selection Rules for the 2020 Democratic National Convention to provide for a change in the manner by which unpledged party leader and elected official (PLEO) delegates participate in the presidential nominating process. In particular, the Commission shall make specific recommendations providing that Members of Congress, Governors and distinguished party leaders (DNC Charter Art. Two, Section 4(h)(ii)(1)-(6)) remain unpledged and free to support their nominee of choice, but that remaining unpledged delegates be required to cast their vote at the Convention for candidates in proportion to the vote received for each candidate in their state.”

Party Reform: “...make appropriate recommendations as to: how to make the party and its candidates more competitive in all regions of the country; how to make the DNC and state parties full and accountable partners in the process of mobilizing voters and winning elections at all levels; how to support and oversee Democratic efforts in legislative and congressional reapportionment and redistricting to ensure Democratic majorities in state legislatures and in Congress; how to broaden the base of the party and empower rank and file Democrats at the grassroots level; and how to expand the DNC’s donor base to make it less dependent on large contributions, to get more people invested in the party, and to enable the party to support important electoral programs...”

In each of these areas of focus, we have been discussing recommendations that will answer the charge of the Commission’s mandate and allow for practical application of those recommendations—all with winning elections and strengthening the party through greater inclusion as our driving beacons. We expect to begin voting on recommendations that will ultimately make up the bulk of the report at our next meeting. We would love to hear from DNC members with your thoughts before then.

The next meeting of the Unity Reform Commission will be held December 8th & 9th in Washington, DC. We will make sure you have any logistical information as soon as it is

finalized. At this meeting, the Unity Commission will finalize our report and submit it to the Rules and Bylaws Committee by January 1, 2018.

In the meantime, we encourage you to reach out with any feedback, questions, or concerns about this important work. We can be reached at unitycommission@dnc.org. As always, we value your thoughts and perspective as we strive to prepare a report and recommendations that make our party and nominating process more open and transparent.