



Democratic National Committee

TO: MEMBERS

FROM: Alice Germond
Secretary

DATE: July 21, 2010

RE: **RULES & BYLAWS UPDATE**

Many of you have asked about the status of the Delegate Selection Rules and the Call to the 2012 Convention that we will vote upon at our meeting in St. Louis. I hope this brief update will be helpful, and since this is an ongoing process, more information will be available before we meet in St. Louis.

The RBC has met in person twice since our last snowy session in Washington, and will meet again telephonically in early August. This is normal for this point in the cycle as we begin the process of drafting the documents that will govern the 2012 Delegate Selection process. We will also meet on Thursday, August 19 prior to other events during our Summer gathering to finalize this work. As you may know, because of the effects of our Delegate Selection process, especially those that are calendar driven, our work on the Rules and the Call must be completed by this meeting.

Our work has been informed by our past experiences and expertise, input from DNC members, the recommendations from the Democratic Change Commission, and considerations of what worked and what can work better. As you may recall, the Democratic Change Commission, which was mandated by the 2008 Convention, was tasked with making recommendations in three main areas: timing of the nominating calendar, unpledged delegates, and caucuses.

TIMING:

For the first time in what is now my very long memory, both the DNC and the RNC are working together to coordinate the timing of the respective party's nominating calendars. There has been general consensus that the schedule begins way too early so this is a welcome development.

For the 2012 cycle, the RBC has voted to move the nominating calendar back. The pre-window states, Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina will hold their events in February, on the 6th, 14th, 18th, and 28th respectively. The window for all other delegations will begin on the first Tuesday in March, the 6th in 2012. After the 2012 cycle, the RBC will assess this part of our process to ensure that we continue to create the best possible nominating process.

We are still mulling the best ways to encourage states as they move to new dates, hopefully spaced thoughtfully throughout the calendar, and perhaps taking advantage of the mini-regional contests that worked so well in 2008. Part of that ongoing discussion is a consideration of a bonus delegate structure to support these goals.

PLEGGED AND UNPLEGGED DELEGATES:

To further encourage participation at every level of our process, the RBC voted on several concepts. We voted to increase the number of pledged base delegates by a total of 700. That number includes converting the approx. 620 alternates and the eighty unpledged add-on delegates to the pledged base allocated to each state. (See the attached proposed Charter Amendment to reflect this housekeeping action.) Thus, for the 2012 Convention, pledged delegates will make up approximately 85% of the convention vote.

The RBC also voted to maintain the status of unpledged delegates who are DNC Members, Democratic Members of the House and Senate, Democratic Governors, and former Party Leaders.

Finally, unpledged delegates would express their support for a presidential candidate (including uncommitted) 10 days after the final step in their state's process. This would allow unpledged delegates, if they chose, to maintain neutrality throughout the process but allows the Party to begin to unify and support the presumptive nominee towards the end of the cycle.

Our State Delegations will have considerably more elected delegates to serve at our Convention. This will enable us to continue our diversity efforts at all levels, and State Delegations will now also include Youth in our outreach inclusion programs, another healthy development in building for the future of our Party.

Alternates for each state and territory have been modified to allocate one alternate for every pledged twelve delegates. We will, of course, continue our practice in which every state will have adequate alternate positions.

CAUCUSES:

The RBC is considering a "best practices" approach to the issues raised around the Caucus process with special note of the dramatic number of attendees in 2008, varying caucus procedures, adequate space, proper notice, tallying, timely reporting, follow up, etc.

Next Steps:

At our telephonic meeting we will continue through the Call to the Convention, which includes Bonus Delegates, the Roll Call, and Convention Standing Committees.

The RBC Members, appointed by Chairman Kaine, brought our diverse experiences, judgment and hopes to this process in our effort to continue building the best system possible. We have endeavored for many cycles to improve on how we select our nominee for the most important job in our nation – and the world. Each time we learn more, sometimes our process yields unintended consequences, and we often try to address both past concerns and problems as well as new opportunities for success.

I do hope this is helpful. We've worked really hard at coming up with these solutions. We've compromised, we've pondered, we've respected one another and tried to create the best ways forward. And, please understand that we are still hard at work, that some things may still change and others get finalized, and that all that we will ultimately offer is a draft for you, the members of the DNC, to vote upon.