
DNC Re-Kapp: Winter Meeting 2023

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Michael --

The Democratic National Committee met for its 2023 Winter Meeting from February 2 to 4, at the Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

[Here was the schedule for the DNC meeting.](#)

The agendas for the [Constituency Caucus](#) meetings, the [Regional Caucus](#) meetings, and the [Council](#) meetings can be found at those links. Here are the agendas for the [Executive Committee](#) and [General Session](#).

At this meeting, the DNC conducted party business including consideration of resolutions and the selection of early state waivers for the 2024 presidential primary.

Pre-Re-Kapp

I don't have any pictures from this meeting, except for this one picture of my reason for my absence.



While I wasn't at the meeting in person, I believe I was still able to make an impact. I'd like to thank the following individuals for holding my proxy at this meeting:

- Ron Harris from Minnesota, for the DNC's Ombudsman Subcommittee
- Garry Shay from California, for the DNC's Executive Committee
- Debbie Nez-Manuel from Arizona, for the Western States Regional Caucus
- David Atkins from California, for the DNC's General Session

(Proxies at the DNC are a little different from proxies at the CDP. You have to have a separate proxy for each individual meeting you will miss, and each proxy holder must already be a member of each meeting that you miss.)

About a week prior to the meeting, I was notified by the DNC about a change in leadership in the Western States Caucus where I serve as Vice Chair. The Chair of the Western States Caucus, Tina Podlowski (Chair of Washington State), was not running for re-election as Washington State Chair. That election was a few days before the DNC meeting. Since Tina was a DNC Member (and Chair of the DNC's Western States Caucus) by virtue of being Washington State Chair, leaving that office meant that she was no longer on the DNC by the time of this meeting in Philly.

Tina has been a friend since before our first DNC meeting together. She was the new Washington State Chair when we first met, at an event supporting Keith Ellison for DNC Chair. Tina was a friend, mentor, and ally. As Western States Caucus Chair, and as a leader for DNC reform, she led with passion, experience, and strength of spirit. I will miss her leadership, but I am grateful for her service to Washington State and the Western States Caucus.

Because I was the Vice Chair of the opposite gender of Tina, the DNC informed me that I was now the Chair of the Western States Caucus. (An election to fill the remainder of Tina's term will happen at the Summer Meeting of the DNC.)

But I wasn't going to be at the meeting.

I called Debbie Nez-Manual, our other Vice Chair, and explained the situation. I apologized that she would unexpectedly have to lead the meeting, without me there to help. I also connected with all the officers of the Western States Caucus and asked each of them to help ensure a smooth meeting.

From everything I heard, it was a good meeting, and I am grateful for Debbie stepping up in my (and Tina's) absences.

Since I became interim Chair, I also absorbed other responsibilities that come with that role. I now serve on the DNC's Executive Committee (with fellow Californians Christine Pelosi and Garry Shay) and the new Ombudsman Subcommittee.

Ombudsman Subcommittee

As you may recall, the Unity Reform Commission was created out of the 2016 Convention and an agreement between the campaigns for Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders. One agreement made at the Unity Reform Commission was to create an "Ombudsman Committee" at the DNC to review allegations of violations of the DNC's Charter or Bylaws by elected or appointed DNC officers.

Since 2017, the DNC has engaged in a process to implement this directive. Philadelphia is the first time this subcommittee met. At the start, members of the Ombudsman Subcommittee, which is under the auspices of the DNC's Rules

and Bylaws Committee, included the two Co-Chairs of the Rules and Bylaws Committee and the Chairs of the Regional Caucuses. At this first meeting, the only item of business was the [proposed Rules of Procedure](#).

Ron Harris, Chair of the Midwestern Caucus and fellow member of the subcommittee, is a good friend and ally who I trust; I gave Ron my proxy.

The proposed Rules had two key weaknesses that, I felt, ran contrary to the intent of the Unity Reform Commission:

1. Section 2A gives the Chair the power to appoint an unlimited number of appointees to the subcommittee. A strict cap on the number of appointees, probably no more than 2-4 appointees, would help to ensure balance while improving diversity.
2. Section 2D requires a recusal if a subcommittee member is alleged to have committed a violation. I felt that, to avoid any appearance of impropriety, if the Chair themselves is alleged to have committed a violation, the Chair's appointees must recuse themselves.

I submitted my questions to rules staff, and I asked Ron, my proxy, to vote no if these sections were not amended. As of this email, I have not received a response from staff on my questions.

Further, my concerns were also not addressed at the subcommittee meeting.

Ron cast my vote as a "no." I was the only "no" vote.

I am grateful that Ron stood up for my voice and the voices of California Democrats and 17 states and territories who voted to place me in this position.

Resolutions

[Here are the resolutions](#) that were approved by the DNC.

For transparency, here are the resolutions I co-sponsored:

- Resolution Commemorating Black History Month
- Resolution Honoring Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Leader Steny Hoyer, and Whip Clyburn
- Resolution on Support of Protecting and Expanding Americans' Voting Rights (sic)
- Resolution Celebrating the American Worker and Labor
- Resolution Celebrating Diversity Among President Biden's Judicial Nominees
- Resolution Condemning Republicans' Extreme, Anti-Choice Agenda

- Resolution Condemning “Dark Money” in our Electoral System and Vowing To Fight For Solutions To Eliminate “Dark Money’s” Influence
- Resolution Recognizing the Impact of Young Voters in the 2022 Election and Increasing Youth Representation
- Resolution Encouraging President Joe Biden to Discuss Statehood for the District of Columbia and Self-Determination for Puerto Rico in High-Profile Settings
- Resolution in Solidarity With Our Friends and Neighbors With Disabilities
- Resolution in Celebration of Lunar New Year
- Resolution in Support of Strong Antitrust Enforcement
- Resolution Recognizing DNC Caucuses and Councils in Their 2022 Midterm Effort and Encouraging the Growth in Their Effort in Coordination With the DNC and State Parties
- DNC Resolution Condemning all forms of White Nationalism and the Rise of Extremist Religious Ideologies
- Resolution Regarding Federal Universal Free School Meals
- Resolution Standing Up for Policies Addressing Environmental Noise Pollution And Calling for Reinstatement of Congressional Funding for the EPA Office of Noise Abatement and Control
- Resolution Honoring the Life and Career of Rosalind “Roz” Wyman

The following were emergency resolutions. If given the chance, I would have co-sponsored both of them:

- Resolution Condemning Gun Violence and Calling for Commonsense Gun Safety Reform
- Resolution Calling for Accountability from Law Enforcement

I also co-sponsored a resolution calling for the DNC to ban the use of dark money in primaries. This was identical to the dark money resolution that wasn't approved at the last meeting. It wasn't approved this meeting either, which is why it doesn't appear on the above link.

General Session

David Atkins (CA) carried my proxy here. Thank you David for carrying out my wishes.

While all votes cast were voice votes, here is what I instructed David on the key issues:

Early states: I was in support of the President's slate of early states. While I have my own preferences on the early state order, President Biden's slate was better and more diverse than what we've had in the past. There was also no alternative slate offered. I was also not inclined to support anything that had the support of Iowa and New Hampshire.

DNC Standing Committee vacancies: I was in support of [the Chair's appointments](#).

DNC At-Large vacancies: I was opposed to the [Chair's At-Large appointments](#). As I've discussed in the past, the DNC's Charter and Bylaws require an open election for these positions. I really like Jaime Harrison but this isn't about him; every DNC Chair has overruled the will of the DNC Membership (and those who elected us to this position.) There was no way to submit candidates to be considered by the full body. This was an appointment, not an election, and was in clear violation of our rules. Therefore, as I've done in the past, I opposed these appointments.

Here is [the livestream of General Session](#) if you'd like to watch.

On behalf of my growing family, thank you for your understanding so that I may spend this special time with our newborn baby.

I plan on attending future meetings of the DNC in person, including the DNC's Summer Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, from October 5 through 7.

If you have any questions or just want to talk about the DNC, you can always reach me by [email](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or text/call me at (510) 717-8260.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you and the California Democratic Party.

Your ally in activism,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Kapp". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "M" and a cursive "Kapp".

Michael Kapp
Member, Democratic National Committee
Chair, DNC Western States Regional Caucus

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