
Keith Ellison for DNC Chair

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To: mdkapp@gmail.com

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Michael --

This email includes:

- my endorsement of Keith Ellison for DNC Chair;
- an announcement about increasing the transparency of our DNC delegation by [adding our emails online](#) for the very first time;
- information about the upcoming DNC candidate forums;
- a reminder about the [CA DNC delegation Tele-Town Hall on January 29th at 7pm](#); and
- my brief thoughts on the Women's Marches and continued activism.

For some reading material, I suggest reading [this op-ed by my DNC colleague and heroine, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, on why she skipped the Inauguration](#). For some even briefer reading material, I suggest [this not-family-friendly tweet by Congressman Ted Lieu commenting on the honesty of Trump's new press secretary](#). Thank you, Ted, for standing up for 65 million Americans!

For more frequent updates on DNC leadership races, you can [follow me on Twitter](#) or on Facebook by [liking my Page](#) or [adding me as a friend](#). Feel free to invite others to sign up for these updates by going to [my website](#).

Keith Ellison for DNC Chair

We are lucky here in California: we have a strong state Democratic Party that has resulted in Democratic sweeps statewide for multiple cycles and a return to the Democratic supermajority in the State Legislature. But there are enormous structural issues at the national level that, while electing Barack Obama to the White House twice, stunted our gains of the last eight years. This resulted in much less progressive legislation than we wanted, including, for example, Obamacare.

Last year, I ran for the DNC because of our failure to address these national structural issues. Our Party failed to fight back against Republican gerrymandering that cost us the House for a decade. Our Party failed to continue the 50 State Strategy. Our Party failed to recruit solid grassroots candidates at all levels of government that are true to our Party Platform and our core progressive values. Every election, nothing less than the American Dream and the health of our planet is in jeopardy.

We deserve better. We need better. Most of all, we must have a change from the status quo. [That is why I support Keith Ellison for DNC Chair](#).



Even though he hails from Minnesota, Congressman Ellison is known to many California Democrats, having attended the California Democratic Party Executive Board meeting in San Diego only a few weeks after Election Day. In his speeches to the Executive Board and several of our Caucuses, Keith recounted his own personal story as an organizer, and then as an organizer who happened to also be an elected official. He told us how when he first ran for Congress, his deep-blue district had the lowest voter turnout in the state; since then, it has the highest. Increased turnout in Ellison's district has also provided the margin of victory for statewide office in this important Midwestern state, ensuring that Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken were elected to the U.S. Senate.

In San Diego, I was able to meet and sit down with Congressman Ellison for about an hour. I had never met him before, but I was immediately impressed with his ability to engage on a personal level. Ellison began our very frank conversation by saying (paraphrasing) "I supported Bernie in the primary. I endorsed Hillary a week before Bernie did. I went everywhere around the country for Hillary, wherever the campaign sent me. And I don't want to relitigate the primary." I was very impressed when he spoke at length about repairing the fracture within the different wings of our Party.

We talked about structural issues within the DNC, about how Members are not listened to by our Party leadership. Ellison spoke about empowering the Membership, about the untapped talent pool of activists that DNC Members are and know within each of our states. He vowed to not only be a more accessible Chair, but one that would listen to the grassroots. We also spoke about the important role California plays in national elections, and how the National Party can begin to mirror the successes we have had because of our strong California Democratic Party. Ellison innately understood that California and our base of activists are more than mere checkbooks for the National Party.

Still, our first conversation couldn't have been an easy one for Ellison; I certainly didn't make it very easy. I asked several pointed questions about his ability to still serve in Congress while acting as the Chair of our National Party. This was a central theme of the campaign I ran, and many Executive Board members, delegates, and grassroots activists had contacted me after the election to reiterate the importance of a full-time Chair. I shared those concerns. Ellison and I went back and forth on this topic for at least twenty minutes.

While I do not need to agree with a candidate 100% of the time in order to support them, I owe it to all California Democrats to be heard and raise the issues we care about -- and therefore I need a DNC Chair willing to listen and learn. Throughout a sometimes tense discussion, I appreciated Ellison's thoughtful approach and willingness to address our concerns.

A few weeks later, immediately after the DNC Executive Committee meeting in Denver, Congressman

Ellison announced that, after speaking with more Members and learning more about the issues surrounding a part-time Chair, he now understood the importance of being full-time. Ellison said that if elected DNC Chair, he would resign from Congress.

This important olive branch to wary DNC Members displayed an incredible amount of personal courage: that Ellison was willing to give up his personal political career for the next four years and dedicate every waking minute to rebuilding state parties and re-energizing the grassroots was an essential beginning.

Over the next few weeks, I kept in contact with Ellison and his excellent campaign staff. I am the President Emeritus of Democrats for Israel, and when some questions were raised about Ellison's past statements, I asked for -- and received -- every bit of information I requested within thirty minutes. Responsiveness is a problem at the DNC, and I greatly appreciated Ellison and his staff's willingness to respond and engage on the toughest questions. I was also pleased to meet with Ellison again on his repeat trip to California, making him the only candidate to come to California twice.

For the last two months since this race began, I have been busy speaking with -- and sometimes meeting with -- the candidates for DNC Chair and other officers. I have been very impressed with the talent pool we have available. I was impressed with Jamie Harrison's work with young people in South Carolina, New Hampshire's Ray Buckley's depth of knowledge of the DNC, Indiana's Pete Buttigieg's personal story and his all-embracing attitude, and Idaho's Sally Boynton Brown's general bad-assery. (If you haven't seen the [Democracy In Color](#) forum earlier this week where Sally spoke eloquently and passionately about Black Lives Matter and white privilege, I highly suggest you do.)

On nearly all issues, no candidate's plan was contradictory to another. I have asked every candidate that if they win, to bring in those who did not to implement their plans for our Party. There is too much work to be done to be concerned with credit. I am pleased with how well the candidates for DNC offices work and respect one another. This has been a campaign of which we can all be proud.

Still, there is only one candidate who I feel can [mend the disparate wings of our Party](#), [has new ideas to bring to the table](#), [brings unmatched on-the-ground organizing experience](#), and [has the clearest vision for bringing young people into our Party](#). That individual is Keith Ellison.

I am pleased that two other members of our new class of DNC Members, Sandra Lowe and Melahat Rafiei, predated me in endorsing Keith Ellison.

I also wanted to give special recognition to Eric Bauman, California Democratic Party Vice Chair and Chair of the Los Angeles County Democratic Party, who is currently running for Chair of the California Democratic Party. It seems to be a general rule that nearly all candidates for office would avoid getting entangled by endorsing in a contested race...but not Bauman. This race was too important for him to stay silent, and I appreciate [Bauman's poignant and thoughtful endorsement of Keith Ellison for Chair](#). By endorsing Ellison for DNC Chair, Bauman showed tremendous leadership and a continued investment in building our Party from the grassroots up.

With so many candidates running for DNC Chair, I understand that there may be a diversity of opinion by California Democrats. Thank you to everyone who has reached out to me by phone, in person, and online about what you believe is important in the next generation of leadership at the DNC. I continue to welcome your input on DNC Officer candidates -- including candidates for DNC Chair -- as we move forward together: you can always reach me on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [my website](#), by phone/text (510-717-8260), or simply responding to this email.

Tele-Town Hall: we want to hear from you!

Your California DNC delegation is hosting a live Telephone Town Hall to give all California Democrats a chance to participate in a conversation about the upcoming DNC leadership elections. **The event will be held on Sunday, January 29th at 7:00pm PST.**

Along with a brief update about the candidates and process of the election, there will be an opportunity to share your thoughts and opinions. We want to hear from you!

[If you would like to be a part of the event and have the system call you automatically when it begins, please sign up here.](#)

Alternatively, you can call into (855)-756-7520 Ext. 34324# at 7:00pm on the 29th.

[There is also a Facebook event here.](#) Please note that you do not have to RSVP on Facebook to attend.

Thank you to my friend and fellow DNC Member [Sandra Lowe](#) who has taken the lead on creating this important listening event. Please send her any questions by [clicking here](#).

Increasing our transparency: CA DNC Members' emails are now available

In a time of transition for the DNC, I believe open lines of communication between California Democrats and our DNC delegation are crucial.

That's why I have asked the California Democratic Party to [add our email addresses to the "DNC Members" page on the CDP website](#) for the very first time.

I ran for the DNC to increase our transparency and accountability, and I will continue to find new ways to engage *you* -- our Party's grassroots -- on the important work we do on your behalf.

DNC Officer candidate forums

The DNC is holding DNC Officer Candidates forums in each of the four geographic regions. You may attend in person or watch online. All forums will be held on Saturday. [All forums are livestreamed here](#); YouTube links will be available after each forum.

DNC Future Forum: Phoenix, AZ ([Watch Phoenix forum](#))

Sheraton Grand Phoenix Hotel, 340 N. 3rd Street, Phoenix, AZ 85004

January 13th – 14th, 2017

DNC Future Forum: Houston, TX

Texas Southern University, Sawyer Auditorium, 3100 Cleburne Street, Houston, TX 77004

January 27th – 28th, 2017

DNC Future Forum: Detroit, MI

Wayne State University Community Arts Auditorium, 5401 Cass Avenue, Detroit, MI 48202

February 3rd – 4th, 2017

DNC Future Forum: Baltimore, MD

Baltimore Convention Center, 1 W. Pratt Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

February 10th – 11th, 2017

[The rules and guidelines for the Future Forums may be found here.](#)

DNC Officer elections will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, at the DNC Winter Meeting on February 23-26.

Like most of you, a few months ago I was looking forward to a very different Inauguration weekend. But I was honored to participate with 750,000 of my closest friends at the Women's March in downtown Los Angeles. 1 out of 45 Californians participated in this massive event that resulted in exactly zero arrests. I look forward to harnessing this newfound energy for organizing into our Democratic Party and ally organizations. Over the next four years we need all the voices and boots we can, and our Party must be welcoming to new thoughts and ideas.



with CDP Resolutions Committee Co-Chair Mary Rose Ortega last Saturday in downtown Los Angeles

Electrified by the millions of people at the Women's Marches this past weekend, I was pleased to attend the Ventura County Democratic Party meeting last night in Camarillo. I spoke about the campaign for DNC leadership offices and welcomed feedback.

Your ally in activism,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Kapp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Kapp".

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