
Report from Baltimore

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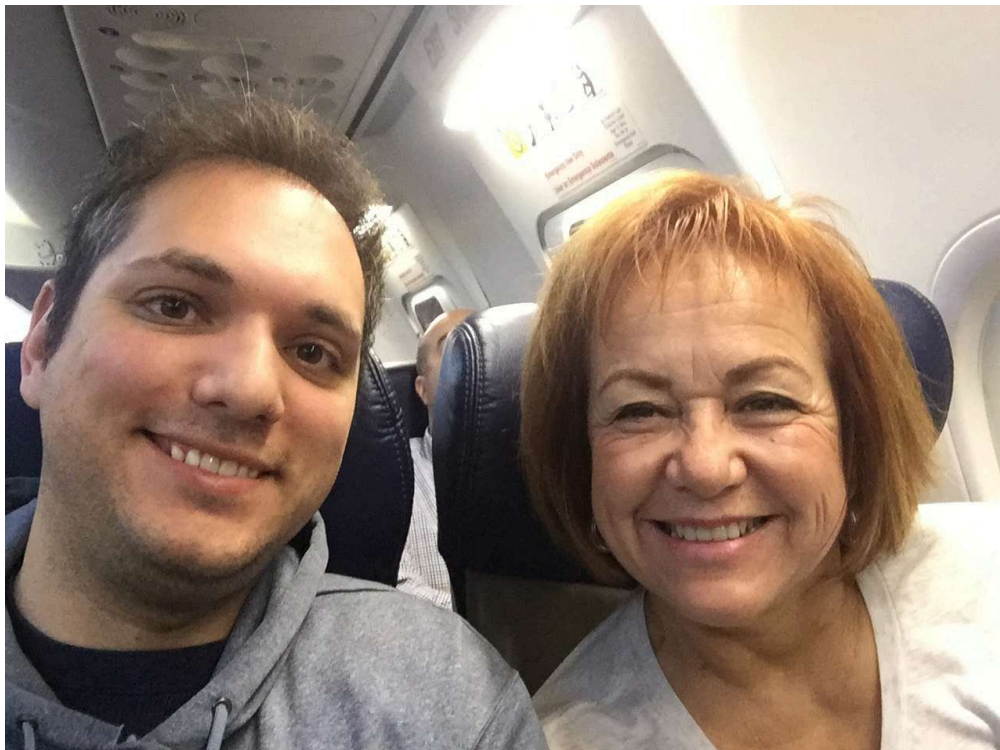
Mon, Feb 13, 2017 at 3:49 PM

Michael Kapp

Member, Democratic National Committee

Michael --

This past weekend, the DNC hosted its [final Future Forum in Baltimore](#). I was pleased to be joined by DNC Vice Chair Maria Elena Durazo, former DNC Secretary Alice Germond, and DNC Members Christine Pelosi, Andrew Lachman, and Otto Lee in representing California on the East Coast.



In the email below, I highlight:

- My question to [DNC Chair candidates on rebuilding our state parties](#)
- My question to [DNC Secretary candidates on youth empowerment](#)
- Keith Ellison rally in Baltimore
- Links to watch all of the DNC Future Forums

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](#).

DNC Chair candidates on their record of rebuilding state parties

I was very happy to be able to ask a question to the DNC Chair candidates about what they have done for state parties. [You can watch my question here](#). The DNC is, for the most part, a federation of state parties -- we are supposed to supply resources (money, volunteers, training, and much more) to state parties, but state parties throughout the country have been neglected for the past 8 years. We are very lucky here in California because of our strong leadership team and army of grassroots volunteers, but many other states are deeply in debt, with no resources to support struggling county parties or Democratic candidates. As we learned last November, California's successes cannot carry the nation. All the Chair candidates have spoken about the importance of empowering state parties, but I wanted to know concrete examples in their individual records that showed their long-standing commitment to building up state parties.



I thought Congressman Keith Ellison gave the best answer to this question, [which you can watch here](#). Ellison talked about how his state (Minnesota) has the highest voter turnout in the country, which has a lot to do with his efforts at [boosting turnout in his district](#) (which used to have the lowest turnout in the state). He spoke about having raised over \$1 million for his state party (at which point a state chair sitting behind me said that he wanted Ellison to raise HIS state \$1 million too!) and working on unity issues in Nevada because his state party chair asked him to help. Ellison also has spoken at many local county-level fundraisers, donated to other state parties, and visited Nebraska, Utah, and 26 other states to raise money for their state parties.

However, I was very disappointed in Tom Perez's response, [which you can watch here](#). He began his answer by saying that "strong parties have strong partners" -- which misses the mark on what went wrong over the last eight years; we have lost over 1,000 elections over that time because our partners such as Organizing for America have depleted the DNC of volunteers and money. He spent some time talking needing to improve our "culture" by better "coordinating with our partners;" while we certainly want to partner with our allies, the DNC cannot be supplanted by them -- which has been the problem. I believe true culture change begins by reevaluating our relationships with allied organizations who, while well-intentioned, have different priorities than the DNC. Finally, Perez spoke about his ability to be a "turnaround agent," using as an example his time as head of the Department of Labor. However, I do not believe that the DNC -- whose mission is to register voters, organize them to the polls, and support state parties and our Democratic candidates -- must be a bottom-up grassroots organization, and is not at all analogous to the top-down bureaucratic structure of the Department of Labor.

All in all, Perez's response didn't answer my question, which was what have you done in the past to support state parties. In fact, I've re-watched his answer to my question about state parties and not once did he use the words "state parties." The DNC cannot keep doing what we have been doing over the last eight years and expect to be successful. It was a bit numbing to see that a DNC Chair candidate didn't understand why we have lost so many races in the past eight years, and then point to the same error in strategy -- "partner organizations" -- as a way to rebuild. Greater coordination and partnership with well-intentioned allied organizations alleviates the DNC of our core responsibility to support and invest in state parties. The DNC needs a different way forward.

DNC Secretary candidates on youth empowerment

Earlier in the day, I asked a question to the DNC Secretary candidates about their youth empowerment strategy. [You can watch my question and their responses here](#). The Secretary has a unique role among the DNC officers as our point of first contact with DNC leadership. In my question, I called my own election as California's only Young Dem DNC Member a sad condemnation of our Party's outreach efforts to young people, and I wanted to know the Secretary candidates' strategies for youth empowerment. I was very happy with the answer by Jason Rae ([you can watch it here](#)), who spoke about his own path to the DNC as a Young Democrat and his long-standing priority to bring more young people into the DNC and our Party. He also spoke about leading a top-to-bottom review of state parties and how they bring in Young Democrats at all levels. He committed to doing more to bring in new people to our Party as DNC Secretary and building a pipeline of leadership, including a sorely-needed onboarding and training program for new DNC Members so we can be effective for our state parties from day one. (In a previous email, I endorsed Jason Rae for DNC Secretary.)

Keith Ellison for DNC rally

During the lunch hour on Saturday, Keith Ellison held a huge rally for hundreds of his supporters. I am so proud that California's own Alice Germond (and former DNC Secretary) was one of the speakers! [You can watch her here](#).

[I also livestreamed Keith Ellison's speech here](#).



DNC Officer candidate forums

The DNC has held DNC Officer Candidates forums in each of the four geographic regions.

*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 ([Watch Houston forum](#))
Texas Southern University, Sawyer Auditorium, 3100 Cleburne Street, Houston, TX 77004*

January 27th – 28th, 2017

DNC Future Forum: Detroit, MI ([Watch Detroit forum](#))

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

February 3rd – 4th, 2017

DNC Future Forum: Baltimore, MD ([Watch Baltimore forum](#))

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

February 10th – 11th, 2017

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

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".

Michael Kapp

Member, Democratic National Committee

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