

---

## On the Unity Commission and superdelegates

---

Michael Kapp, DNC Member <michael@michaelkapp.com>  
To: mdkapp@gmail.com

Mon, Mar 5, 2018 at 6:24 PM



Michael --

With the next DNC meeting coming up this week, I wanted to talk to you about the Unity Reform Commission (URC) and their proposal on what to do with unpledged delegates, also known as superdelegates.

Short version: We can and should do better than the URC proposal. Instead of creating a tiered system of superdelegates as recommended by the URC, **we should eliminate all superdelegates by saying that they cannot vote on the first round.** The URC recommendations should be a baseline minimum of what we can accomplish, not the maximum.

Longer version:

The URC was created at the 2016 Democratic National Convention to resolve problems identified in our presidential nominating process. Members of the URC are mostly supporters of Hillary Clinton, a smaller number appointed by Bernie Sanders, and the remainder to be appointed by the DNC Chair (Tom Perez). The URC recommendations were required to be completed before the end of 2017, and these recommendations must be passed by the full DNC Membership. (For recommendations that would change the DNC Charter, a 2/3s vote would be required.)

The URC was tasked with many things, including Party reform, election reform, transparency in our process, and to involve more voters in our Party. One element that has had a very public focus is regarding superdelegates. Superdelegates include elected officials -- such as Democratic Governors, Senators, and Members of Congress -- and DNC Members, most of whom are elected by State Parties, with the remainder being appointed at-large by the Chair.

After many meetings, all of which were open to the public, the URC crafted a proposal that would create three tiers of superdelegates:

- In the first tier, elected officials would retain their unpledged status.
- In the second tier, DNC Members elected from the states would be bound to their state results.
- In the third tier, at-large/appointed DNC Members would be bound to the overall election return.

While this solution would reduce superdelegates by 60%, it presented quite a few problems -- not the least of which would be that I felt this proposal could never have passed with a 2/3s vote. This proposal would have kept many elected officials as unbound superdelegates while binding the votes of DNC Members.

Another problem with this proposal was that it didn't go far enough; I believe we need to eliminate all superdelegates. Furthermore, protecting the special status of elected officials (who are more white, male, and wealthier than the diverse DNC Membership) would be a step backwards for equity within our broader Party leadership. **Since the release of the URC recommendations, I have spoken with dozens of DNC Members throughout the country, many of whom said that they could not vote for**

**this disparate treatment that favored elected officials over State Party representatives (DNC Members).**

At the DNC Rules & Bylaws meeting in Washington DC a few days ago, consideration was given for an alternate proposal suggested by Kansas DNC Member Chris Reeves, myself, and others as a better and more comprehensive move towards eliminating superdelegates. Unlike the tiered system recommended by the Unity Commission, this proposal was simple: **reduce superdelegates to zero by saying they cannot vote on the first round.** (Instead, former superdelegates would be unpledged on other rounds of voting...just like every other Convention delegate, including those elected at the congressional district-level.)

This proposal has several benefits:

- would prevent the media from reporting superdelegate votes
- would eliminate the equity gap created by the URC proposal between elected officials and the more diverse DNC Membership
- would eliminate the equity gap between superdelegates and pledged delegates
- protects against elected officials and Party officers from running against local grassroots activists for delegate spots to the Convention
- unlike the tiered URC proposal, it is far easier to explain: "we reduced superdelegates to zero"
- this change is far easier to pass, only requiring 50% of DNC Members (instead of 2/3s)

In most ways, this proposal returns superdelegates to their original intended role, and it means that voters can vote with confidence knowing their vote is the only one that matters. Elected officials and other unpledged delegates know they are guaranteed a place at the Convention, and we allow them to advocate for their candidate without being seen as casting votes before the race is decided.

This solution honors the traditions of the party and recognizes the supporters of Bernie Sanders who want to make sure superdelegates do not impact or alter the process: no vote in the first round for superdelegates provides the cleanest and most straightforward solution.

The URC has given us a lot of great solutions for fixing the problems that arose in 2016 (and indeed, in earlier elections), and I know Our Revolution and other allies have been asking that DNC Members vote for the URC recommendations as-is, without amendments -- but I believe we can and must go farther on superdelegates.

So what happens next, you ask? The "no vote on first round" proposal should replace the URC's tiered proposal in the package of recommendations that the DNC Rules and Bylaws Committee will present to DNC at our Fall meeting.

Thank you to Chris Reeves, the DNC Rules and Bylaws Committee, and everyone else who made it possible to get this far.

I will be supporting this new proposal, and will be asking my DNC colleagues from around the country to join me.

As always, please feel free to shoot me an [email](#), [Facebook message](#), [Twitter DM](#), or text/call me at (510) 717-8260.

Your ally in activism,



Michael Kapp  
Member, Democratic National Committee

<http://www.michaelkapp.com/>

Michael Kapp for DNC · 3731 Wilshire Blvd, Suite #514, Los Angeles, CA 90010, United States

This email was sent to [mdkapp@gmail.com](mailto:mdkapp@gmail.com). To stop receiving emails, [click here](#).

You can also keep up with Michael Kapp, DNC Member on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).