



FLORIDA DEMOCRATS

Putting Floridians First Because Security Begins At Home

Dear Florida Democrat,

For a year now, the Florida Democratic Party has tried to comply with the Delegate Selection Rules of the Democratic National Committee.

We researched every potential alternative process - from caucuses to county conventions to mail-in elections - but no plan could come anywhere close to being viable in Florida.

We made a detailed case to the DNC Rules & Bylaws Committee, but we were denied.

Our Democratic legislators in Tallahassee tried to set the Florida primary on Feb. 5, instead of Jan. 29, but of course, [their proposed amendment to House Bill 537 was greeted with laughter and derision from the Republicans who control the state government.](#)

Does '537' ring a bell? It should. It's the number of votes that separated Texas Gov. George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore in Florida in 2000.

It's the number that sent this country and this world in a terrible direction.

We can't let 537 - or the Republicans - determine our future again.

President Bush plans to stop in Florida tomorrow to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Republican National Committee's efforts to elect his successor in November.

The last thing America needs is a third Bush term. Despite the widespread anxiety that working families feel, not to mention the broad agreement among economists that we are in a recession, President Bush and John McCain blindly believe that the economy is strong.

And let me remind you that John McCain endorsed President Bush's decision to deny health care to thousands of Florida children by vetoing an expansion of the successful SCHIP program. McCain also promises to jeopardize the financial security of Florida seniors by privatizing Social Security. He continually threatens to push Florida's military families to the brink by keeping American troops in Iraq for "100 years" or more.

This is why we are Democrats, and this is why we must stick together, no matter where this ongoing delegate debate takes us.

Last week, the Florida Democratic Party laid out the only existing way that we can comply with DNC Rules - a statewide revote run by the Party - and asked for input.

Thousands of people responded. We spent the weekend reviewing your messages, and while your reasons vary widely, the consensus is clear: Florida doesn't want to vote again.

So we won't.

A party-run primary or caucus has been ruled out, and it's simply not possible for the state to hold another election, even if the Party were to pay for it. Republican Speaker of the Florida House Marco Rubio refuses to even consider that option. Florida is finally moving to paper ballots, which is a good thing, but it means that at least 15 counties do not have the capacity to handle a major election before the June 10th DNC primary deadline.

This doesn't mean that Democrats are giving up on Florida voters. It means that a solution will have to come from the DNC Rules & Bylaws Committee, which is scheduled to meet again in April.

When this committee stripped us of 100% of our delegates last year, some members summed up their reasoning by saying, "The rules are the rules." Unfortunately, the rules did not apply to Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina when they, too, violated the DNC calendar by moving from their assigned dates.

As the late great Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "We must adjust our ideas to the facts of today... Rules are not necessarily sacred, principles are."

The Florida Democratic Party has stuck to its principles throughout this debate. We've remained open-minded while never wavering from our commitment to an open and fair election that would allow all Florida Democrats to participate, whether serving in Iraq, retiring in Boca, studying abroad or entertaining at a theme park.

Another late great President -Abraham Lincoln, a Republican - said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

If Democrats heed this wisdom, we will win in November.

America needs a great president again, but a President McCain will settle for the status quo and carry on the disastrous Bush tradition.

President Clinton or President Obama will make history and lead this nation in a new direction.

Let's remember this as the delegate debate continues. We must stick together as Democrats. The stakes are too high and the opportunities too great.

I will keep you posted on any major developments. Thank you for your concern and

your commitment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen L. Thurman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Congresswoman Karen L. Thurman
Chair, Florida Democratic Party