



October 28, 2015

Allison Tant, State Chair
Florida Democratic Party
214 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Dear State Chair Tant,

We have reviewed the October 6, 2015, letter from you, the Chair of the FDP Select Committee on Rules Revision, and the Co-Chairs of the FDP Rules Committee.

Your letter seeks a determination by the DNC Rules and Bylaws Committee as to whether it is appropriate for the Florida Democratic Party (FDP) to use weighted votes to conduct party business, particularly the selection of DNC members and Party officers who, by virtue of their positions, serve as unpledged delegates to the National Convention. You also seek guidance about the timing of the selection of these Party offices.

As noted in your letter, the FDP has used a weighted vote system since the mid-1970s. That was roughly the same time that the Democratic National Committee and many state parties revised their charter and bylaws to reflect court rulings in the 1960s that required the principle of “one person, one vote” to be applied to state legislatures.

Allocating weighted votes to ensure that larger counties would have representative voting strength on the State Committee was a well-intended concept. And, adding weighted votes for certain Democratic elected officials was also well intended to ensure a strong voice by individuals with proven election track records.

In looking at the FDP’s weighted vote system through the lens of today’s Democratic Party, we have concluded that the weighted voting system is not producing a result that truly represents or reflects our party. More importantly, this system conflicts with our guiding principle of “one person, one vote.” This is a serious concern.

Based on the facts presented in your letter, we are troubled about the voting provisions in the current FDP Charter and Bylaws. There is a lack of appropriate representation by significant components of the Democratic electorate -- particularly the significant underrepresentation of Hispanics and youth is disturbing. Decisions made using the current system have significant and serious long-term implications on key party decisions, such as the selection of the party’s leadership (i.e., officers and DNC members).

Accordingly, the Florida Democratic Party must take steps to change its Charter and Bylaws to correct its system of weighted voting. We encourage the FDP to take steps toward increasing the diversity of its State Committee membership. The FDP's goals for its 2016 National Convention delegation can serve as a guide for the outreach needed to bring more diversity to the table.

In regard to your question about the timing of the selection of Florida's DNC members to serve the 2017-2020 term, the FDP needs to implement a new "one person, one vote" structure before selecting its new DNC members. Therefore, if it is necessary to conduct that selection process in 2017, this letter will serve as a waiver from that timing requirement.

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us directly, or Patrice Taylor, the Director of the Office of Party Affairs and Delegate Selection.

Sincerely,



Lorraine Miller
DNC Rules & Bylaws Committee
Co-Chair



James Roosevelt, Jr.
DNC Rules & Bylaws Committee
Co-Chair