

**How can we call our party the Democratic Party when we can't elect the party leadership? Hang on. This one is tricky.**

The party leadership has enormous power, and we can't remove them when they promote Corporate Democrats. The potential for corruption is frightening. It's probably not even illegal for Republicans to throw money at the DNC. Both political parties are private organizations, and party insiders can help or hinder individual candidates. Party leaders are gatekeepers who are not elected. They can't make a president all by themselves, but they can stop a popular candidate from getting the Democratic nomination.

The DNC locked out Bernie Sanders in the last election. Who has the authority to investigate ballot stuffing and dirty tricks in primary elections? The DNC is a private club. I remember waiting all night on the results from a state primary race where Bernie and Hillary were just a few votes apart. At 3AM, Hillary suddenly got a few thousand votes and "won." There was a lot of trickery in that primary.

The DNC runs the primary debates. They just announced that Elizabeth Warren doesn't get to go head to head with the other front-runners in the first debate of 2019. Think of the power of that authority. The DNC is appointed by insiders. They can set the agenda. They can make sure that Democratic candidates don't argue about Wall Street. They can focus on wedge issues like the Republicans do when they want to divert attention away from economic policy.

Over half of the Democrats in Congress are Corporate Democrats. All of the Republicans and half of the Democrats take dark corporate money. The Democratic Party can't cleanse itself until the corporate wing is removed from the Democratic leadership. Public opinion has moved to the left of the Republican Party AND the Corporate Democrats. 75% of the voting public is locked out. The Republican Party is imploding into Fascism, but we can't get real Democrats elected. The DNC is still blocking FDR Progressives like it's 1980 when anything to the left of Reagan felt risky.

This is all just a rusty truckload of more proof that real Democracy has yet to evolve. It's coming, but there are lots of important political decisions that are still shielded from public opinion by representative Democracy.

You can't really vote against going to war. You can't vote directly on

who runs the Federal Reserve. You can't vote directly against the appointment of a supreme court judge. If your wrong voting senator has 6 more years left before his/her next election, all will be forgotten by then. You can't vote on who gets to run for president in a primary. That's decided in back rooms by political professionals.

Even in a primary election, we can only vote for pre-selected candidates. We have to choose from the menu presented to us. 23 Democrats are running right now. Many of them are unknown. The DNC has the power to manipulate the situation to help Corporate Democrats, and we can't change the leadership of the DNC, no matter what they do.

Many of those 23 Democratic candidates are probably secretly funded by Wall Street. That's what I would do if I were a corporate billionaire. With no more enforceable limits on campaign contributions, the Koch Brothers can slip millions under the table to dozens of phony candidates. That chips away at the base of a legitimate front-runner.

If a Progressive like Bernie Sanders is running a close race with a Corporate Democrat like Joe Biden, 6 long shot candidates with 2% of the vote can sink the legitimate Progressive candidate in a hurry when the phony Progressives sound authentic.  $6 \times 2\% = 12\%$ . Unknown candidates can talk the Progressive talk, strip votes away from a real Progressive, lose, and melt away. We would never know if they were Progressive or not.

Only proven known candidates with a progressive voting record deserve our trust. It's easy for an unknown candidate to declare themselves "The global warming candidate." A slick unknown candidate could strip away a fraction of the Progressive base, lose, and retire with a big bag of cash from Republican donors. I think several obscure Democratic candidates are trying to do that right now.

The only way that the Democratic Party can defend against this big money strategy is to allow the Democratic leadership to be elected by individual party members, not by insider appointments. Don't even get me started on superdelegates.

I anticipate the criticism that open elections would allow Republicans to register as Democrats and vote Corporate Democrats into the DNC. That's a problem for sure, and if we don't find a way to stop that, we're doomed to slow incremental progress.

First of all, we already have Corporate Democrats running the DNC. To

do nothing locks that in. Second, we could hold off until Republican leaders allow Republican voters to elect the Republican Party Leadership directly. The crossover would go both ways after that, but don't hold your breath on the Republican Party embracing Democracy.

Although the Republicans did dump their superdelegates before the Democrats and that helped Trump. The Democrats still have superdelegates with limited power, but failing to block Trump with superdelegates is not an argument for keeping superdelegates in the DNC. We are the Democratic Party. Democracy is good.

So what can we do right now to get the Democratic Party leadership to stop selling out to dark corporate money and let the real Democratic base, the center-left, compete on a fair and even playing field in the Democratic primary?

I'm not a fan of third party campaigns. This is a two party system, and voting for a third party candidate throws your vote away. But we need to show the DNC that we refuse to be taken for granted while they pander to Republican voters. The ideal strategy is to bang the drums for a Progressive candidate until the last primary vote is counted. If a Corporate Democrat wins, then we hold our nose and vote against the Republican in the general election. That takes discipline that many voters don't have. Lots of Bernie Sanders voters were so angry with the DNC for obstructing their candidate that they couldn't vote for Hillary Clinton.

But even if every center-left Democrat has the discipline to do the "hold your nose and switch after the primary" strategy, the DNC can still see that coming. If they know the votes will be there anyway, they don't need to make concessions.

The third party people make a good argument here. Maybe we need to see further ahead than one election at a time. I had to gulp to say that. We're so predictable. It feels like we're on The Price is Right. We bid \$3.50 and the next guy bids \$3.51. Maybe we need to dig in a shock the DNC by refusing to hold our noses for several hard elections. Republicans would win and do more damage, but the Progressive political philosophy would grow faster that way, just as it did under Trump.

I'm so frustrated. We have the popular vote to get real Democrats elected right now. Part of me wants to stay the course and wait for the DNC to move to the left gradually. The other part of me wants to shock the DNC

into action by refusing to vote for Corporate Democrats entirely. For me, for now, it's all about convincing the DNC to stop begging Republicans for votes.

The DNC can solve the problem all by themselves. How could a Progressive administration hurt them? A solid Progressive FDR style Democratic Party would be so strong. How could the current DNC leadership not want to be a part of that?

Many Corporate Democrats don't even want to take dark money. They're defensive. They only play the game because their Republican opponent does. With Progressives in power, Democrats would no longer need to match billionaire Republican donors. A Progressive Democratic Party would legislate dark money out of the system and implement publicly funded elections.

Write to Congress. The country is ready for what real Democrats have always wanted, an FDR style Democratic Party. We have the popular vote. Tell the DNC that all they have to do is declare victory and come home.