

# United States Congress



April 3, 2008

Mr. James Roosevelt  
Ms. Alexis Herman  
Co-Chairs  
Rules and Bylaws Committee  
Democratic National Committee  
Democratic Party Headquarters  
430 South Capitol St., SE  
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Jim and Alexis:

As the two of you may know, our delegation had a very productive meeting with Gov. Dean yesterday morning. The joint statement which we issued with the governor outlined our commitment to moving forward to ensure that Florida's delegates are seated at the national convention.

The Democratic National Committee's (DNC) delegate selection rules establish the party's commitment to holding public meetings, providing adequate notice to members and making publicly available the "legal and practical procedures for selection of Democratic Party officers and representatives on all levels." (See Rule 4 of the Delegate Selection Rules for the 2008 Democratic National Convention.)

It is our understanding that the DNC staff has been reviewing two appeals to the Rules and Bylaws Committee (RBC). The appeals in question seek to overturn the sanction the RBC imposed on the Florida Democratic Party last summer. That sanction decreed that the Florida would lose all of its pledged and unpledged delegates to the 2008 convention, because the date of the primary – Jan. 29 – was deemed in violation of the national party's rules. The appeals seek alternative remedies that would restore at least a portion of the delegates.

We also understand that recommendations from the DNC staff regarding the appeals were provided to you on Monday. Our offices were told that the recommendations are being kept confidential, and we further understand that you, as chairs of the RBC, may choose to adopt the confidential recommendations without a hearing.

The Democratic Party is an open party. Building on yesterday's discussion, it would be inconsistent with the DNC's commitment to openness to keep actions on these appeals under a cloak of secrecy. This is an issue central to the status of Florida's participation in the Democratic National Convention in August. Any documents that reflect the RBC's decision-making process should be disclosed to all party members. At the very least, a public hearing of the RBC should be held very soon to review the staff recommendations before a final decision.

If the Rules and Bylaws Committee does not proactively and openly resolve the issue of how to honor Florida's primary and seat the state's delegates, the entire nominating process will continue to unfold under a cloud. This only serves to perpetuate division instead of unity as we move toward the convention and general election – something on which we agreed yesterday is not in the best interest of the party or the nation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you as we move forward.

Sincerely,



Bill Nelson



Alcee L. Hastings

cc: Hon. Howard Dean  
Mr. Tom McMahon  
Hon. Corrine Brown  
Hon. Allen Boyd  
Hon. Robert Wexler  
Hon. Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Hon. Kathy Castor  
Hon. Ron Klein  
Hon. Tim Mahoney