



CONGRESSMAN CEDRIC RICHMOND

2nd Congressional District
Louisiana

August 13, 2018

The Honorable Tom Perez
Chairman, Democratic National Committee
430 South Capitol Street Southeast
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Chairman Perez:

I write to express strong opposition to the proposed reforms to the Democratic Party's presidential nominating process, specifically the proposal to deny unpledged delegates a vote on the first ballot. As the Party prepares to vote on these reforms later this month, I would like to raise the concerns expressed by many of my colleagues in Congress who are members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

My colleagues and I wholeheartedly appreciate the passion and talent local officials and activists bring to the Democratic Party. Additionally, we feel they should play an important role in selecting the Party's nominees for President and Vice President. However, we do not think the effort to empower local leaders in the nominating process is served well by diminishing the power of Members of Congress. Authors of the reforms have stated they seek to ensure that delegates elected by voters in primaries and caucuses have the primary role in selecting the Party's nominees. This aim ignores the fact that voters elect Members of Congress every two and six years. There is no reason to honor one election and not the other.

Additionally, the thought that a Member of Congress would have to compete with their constituents in an election to secure a first ballot vote on the Party's nominee creates unnecessary friction between those elected and the people they are elected to serve. It is easy to see that such competition would have unintended consequences and foster the perception of an uneven playing field.

There should be enough room in the process to include the perspective of local party activists and officials, and Members of Congress. One group should not be harmed at the expense of the other. To add insult to injury, it appears that this is a solution in search of a problem. Unelected delegates have never gone against the will of primary voters in picking Democratic presidential nominees.

Passage of the reforms in their current form would disenfranchise elected officials for no substantive reason and would create unnecessary competition between those elected and their constituents. Also, it has been pointed out that the changes being sought can only legally be made through changing the Democratic Party's charter. While this may not be the most expeditious route, it may be the only legal route. For these reasons, I urge you and the members of the Party to oppose the reforms in their current form.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cedric L. Richmond
Chairman, Congressional Black Caucus

Cc: Members, Democratic National Committee