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Nebraska Democrats Elect New Leadership

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Black Votes Matter
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Black Lives, Black Poverty and Black Votes Matter

Nebraska Democrats Elect New Leadership

During the 2016 State Convention, In Kearney Nebraska, Nebraska Democrats voted in several highly contested races, they voted for new leadership top to bottom.

State Chairperson: Jane Kleep
State 1st Associate Chair: Frank LaMere
State 2nd Associate Chair: Tom Tilden
National Committeeman: Ron Kaminski
National Committeewoman: Patty Zieg
Black Caucus Chair: Chelsey Gentry-Tipton
Black Caucus Vice Chair: Maurice J Jones
Black Caucus Treasurer: Cornelius Williams
Black Caucus Secretary: Fionia Matthews
Black Caucus CD2 Director: Michael Hudes
LD13 NDP Central Committee: Preston Love Jr.
LD11 NDP Central Committee:

The Nebraska State Convention is an important meeting for Democrats and while it is held every two years, the convention is highly attended and most important during the presidential years (every four years). The convention also deals with party credentials, rules and the party's platform. The platform of a party is its position on the issues. This year the 2016 State Convention made national news by passing a resolution calling for the National Party to eliminate Super Delegates.

Quick course on Super Delegates. During the Primary season the candidates run to win the primary or caucus in each state. For Democrats, the results of the elections are tallied and then delegates are allocated to the candidates proportionally, according to their vote percentage. Each state has a number of delegates allotted, based on the size of the state. Nebraska has 30. After the Nebraska caucus in which Sanders beat Clinton 51% to 46%, the delegates were allocated 15 for Sanders and 10 for Clinton. Those are called pledged delegates because they are pledged to one candidate or the other, they are committed to vote for that candidate. Who actually are the delegates? It is determined by a vote at the state conventions. Those Delegates were chosen this past week at the convention in Kearney.

There is one additional detail of the 30 Nebraska delegates 5 are Super Delegates. Super Delegates are party officials and are not elected, but appointed. Candidate Bernie Sanders

argues that all delegates should come from the pool of elected delegates based on the popular vote from the Primary or Caucus, and not be appointed. The Nebraska Resolution calls for that change to be made nationwide for all primaries and caucuses.

African American participation was up this year. Most African American come from Douglas and Sarpy County but there were a small number sprinkled from Lincoln and around the state. African Americans were not prominent in the workings of the party's convention or as major recipients of major party elective offices. African Americans were visible, as expected in the proceedings of the Black Caucus and in the nomination and seconding of some of the other elections. There were an increased dialogue during the convention with a number respected African Americans, regarding the future direction of the Nebraska Democratic Party and needs of our communities going forward. I remain optimistic but guarded as to see whether real inclusiveness will occur. What is at stake for the state party is three significant facts:

1. The heavy lifters, such as myself, who do most of the hard work in getting the black vote to the polls, which includes the very effective Black Votes Matter initiative will not stand by any longer and be taken for granted. We will not continue to participate with state and national efforts which pay outsiders and provide no funding assistance to our efforts.
2. An excited and new crop of bright and energetic young African Americans are courting involvement with the party. They will not stay if we do not embrace them, activate them and affirm them. That's why I worked so hard at the convention to activate many new and young blacks and at the Black Caucus elections. The party at large needs to do the same.
3. Black Elected officials are presently by and large, in-active democrats. They are democrats when on the ballot for sure. But they are not involved in the workings and are not advocates of the party in our communities, because of the lack of real outreach and affirmation they receive from the party. Our community is overwhelmingly Democrat, but our low turnout has been partly due to luke warm voter activism by our BEO. The Democratic Party must share some of blame.

I say to our new party leadership. Take our input seriously or the party will continue to suffer. Activate those who are on the team and who can deliver. You lose us and the independent rolls will increase and the black turnout will decrease. Push to activate programs that address our real needs, jobs, economic and business development to begin with.

