

To: Interested Parties
From: The Clinton Campaign
Date: March 19, 2008
RE: Obama's Re-Vote Pledge: Just Words

On February 8, 2008, Barack Obama stood in the aisle of his airplane and told reporters that he would be "fine <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sxiQ2J0fV5M>" with a new primary in Michigan if it could be done in a way that gave him and Senator Clinton time to make their respective cases and the DNC signed off. Since then, such a plan has garnered broad support from top Michigan lawmakers and the DNC has given its blessing.

So Barack Obama is on board, right? Guess again. It turns out that his comments about being fine with a re-vote if the above conditions were met were just words. As yesterday's headline in the Detroit Free-Press <http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080318/NEWS15/80318042/1215/NEWS15> made clear, Senator Obama is the lone standout: "Michigan do-over depends on Obama's backing, Senate leaders say."

The Clinton campaign believes the right to vote is a bedrock principle of our country and that empowering the people of Michigan and Florida to make their voices heard must be a priority for any candidate running for the Democratic nomination. As such, we must either honor the original vote or hold a state-run primary that doesn't leave the taxpayers footing the bill.

So why is the Obama campaign refusing to give the people of Michigan the chance to exercise their fundamental right to vote? Let's take a quick look at what the Obama campaign is arguing and explore why those arguments are wrong:

False Excuse #1: Barack Obama Wasn't on the Ballot. The Obama campaign argues that their candidate wasn't on the January ballot because the Michigan primary wasn't sanctioned by the DNC and they were trying to comply with the early state pledge. Let's remember that the point of the early state pledge was to protect the role of the four states that held early nominating contests. Well the contests in those states were protected and the people in Iowa, South Carolina, New Hampshire and Nevada got a chance to vote. Keep in mind that nearly twice as many people voted in Michigan and Florida than voted in the four early states combined.

Senator Clinton signed the pledge and kept it. Senator Obama signed the pledge and kept it in Michigan. But in so doing, Senator Obama decided to go further and made a voluntary decision to remove his name from the Michigan ballot. That was his right but it was also his decision. As a result, he denied Michigan the opportunity to vote for a slate of candidates. There aren't many second chances in life but Senator Obama has one now and should ask the people of Michigan for their vote. Why is he refusing to do so?

False Excuse #2: Obama Voters Participated in GOP Primary. The Obama camp will argue that their supporters voted in the GOP primary because Barack Obama wasn't on the Democratic ballot. They argue that the legislation's effort to comply with the DNC rules is unfair since the bill would prohibit people who voted in the 2008 GOP primary in Michigan from voting a second time in the Democratic contest. On its face, you might think the Obama campaign is making a sound case. But two points render their argument inoperable:

First, the Obama campaign has repeatedly said that it would comply with DNC rules and DNC Rule 2.E

<http://marcambinder.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/03/not technically a hurdle in mi.php> prohibits cross-over voting. The draft legislation does not permit anyone who voted in Michigan's Republican primary in January to now vote in the Democratic primary. Senator Obama has said that this is a key reason why he cannot support the legislation but that provision must be in the bill in order to comply with the DNC rules. So while Senator Obama's campaign says he will follow

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080305/ap_on_el_pr/primary_scramble the rules, he wants one of them to be ignored.

Second, the Obama campaign's allies in Michigan organized an effort to get people in Michigan to vote for "uncommitted" in the Democratic primary, helping to bring the uncommitted share of vote to 40 percent. So the Obama camp can't reasonably argue supporters participated in the GOP primary and didn't vote in the Democratic contest.

False Excuse #3: Clinton Supporters Have Said They'd Raise Money For a Primary and They Back Clinton. The Obama campaign will argue that Clinton supporters have said they'd help raise money to finance the primary and that's not fair. Last time we checked, the Obama campaign wasn't hurting for donors. More to the point, Democrats are blessed this cycle with an energized grassroots. We believe that appealing to everyday people to finance this primary exemplifies what this election is about: giving a voice to the voiceless.

False Excuse #4: Michigan Law Requires First-time Absentee Voters Must Vote In Person Before They Can Vote Absentee – Just Like in Illinois. The Obama camp will argue

http://marcambinder.theatlantic.com/archives/2008/03/michigan_primary_trouble_the_f.php that they are at a disadvantage because a lot of their supporters are college students who vote absentee. But Michigan law says that a person voting absentee must cast a vote in person before they are eligible to vote absentee which will result in the exclusion of many Obama supporters, of whom many are first time voters. The Obama campaign should be familiar with that sort of system since it's the rule in Illinois and we didn't hear too much complaining in the run-up to February 5 primary there. More to the point, this rule will be in place in Michigan for the general election. So will the Obama campaign use this excuse to justify writing off Michigan in the general if Barack Obama is the nominee? We hope not.

The bottom line is that Michigan has all the problems and promise that we talk about in this country. Competing in Michigan sends a signal that Democrats care and understand the people there deserve the chance to make their voices heard and need someone in the White House who will hear their voices.

If Barack Obama doesn't want to help make that happen, Hillary Clinton is ready to do so. We call on the Obama campaign to let the people of Michigan vote.