

THE “BLUE RIBBON” MI COMPROMISE

So there I was, settling into my first pilgrimage glass of wine, when all of a sudden I see that the same folks who were in charge of planning a MI Mulligan had proposed their own compromise to seat MI’s delegation in Denver. So much for relaxing my way into vacation.

Here’s the operative part of the proposal.

As a result, we recommend that the Michigan Democratic Party request the DNC to seat Michigan’s delegates, and that the pledged delegates be apportioned 69 to Senator Clinton and 59 to Senator Obama. That approach splits the difference between the 73/55 position of the Clinton campaign and the 64/64 position of the Obama campaign, based on our belief that both sides have fair arguments about the Michigan primary.

While we expect that neither candidate will explicitly embrace this approach, we believe that the DNC should adopt it and both candidates should accept it because it is fair and because it would resolve an impasse that with each passing day hurts our chances of carrying Michigan and winning the Presidency. We also believe that the DNC must exercise the leadership to resolve this impasse and not allow it to fester any longer. We urge you to seek the approval of the Executive Committee of the Michigan Democratic Party for this proposal and forward it promptly to the DNC for their consideration.

We also want to express our opposition to the challenge filed by DNC Member Joel Ferguson with the DNC Rules and Bylaws Committee regarding Michigan’s

delegates to the Democratic National Convention. Mr. Ferguson's proposed remedy – seating Michigan's so-called super-delegates with a full vote, and seating Michigan's pledged delegates with a half vote – is unacceptable to us on two grounds. First, we cannot agree to a remedy that allows for super-delegates who didn't run for the position to have a full vote, while pledged delegates selected by the voters have only half a vote. Second, we see no justification for seating Michigan's delegates with anything less than full voting rights. If Michigan is punished for fighting the DNC's decision to grant New Hampshire a waiver, it will hurt the Party's chances of carrying Michigan in November. We will communicate these views to the Rules and Bylaws Committee and request that you ask the Executive Committee of the Michigan Democratic Party to take a similar position.

Sincerely,

Senator Carl Levin
Representative Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick
UAW President Ron Gettelfinger
DNC Member Debbie Dingell

cc: Governor Jennifer Granholm

A couple of thoughts. First, I think it rather likely that at least one member of this committee has seen my Solomon's Baby proposal and my petition. And most MI politicians watch Tim Skubick's show closely, so perhaps my little tirade about elections with only one candidate on it got some notice. I don't know whether that has influenced the Blue Ribbon committee to come up with their own proposal. But I'll take it, in any case.

I'll have to do the math at some point when I'm not fresh off a red-eye (actually, "fresh" is not the word for it). But numbers-wise, this

works out to be close to what I proposed. There are, of course, two big differences. First, my proposal lets the candidates choose their 14 At Large delegates. I did that for two reasons: first, to incent the campaigns to take this plan. And second, to allow Obama to exercise more control over the delegate selection process, since he was uninvolved in vetting candidates in our district caucuses (and also, I've been told, uninvolved in the smoky-room attempts to come up with slates for the caucuses, which only worked in a few districts). This proposal states clearly that MI's delegates would be split between Obama and Clinton, though, which is not what happened at the district caucuses. Are they suggesting we revote all the delegates?

As an aside, there may be some push to hold a revote for reasons that have nothing to do with Obama. In the aforementioned smoky-room deal-making, some attention was paid to giving UAW and other unions a seat at the table. Reportedly, however, after all sides had agreed on their slates, Hillary's team pulled most, but not all, of the UAW names off their slate—they didn't want anyone with divided loyalties in their delegation. Then, though the unions had selected candidates for the Uncommitted side, they only managed to get them elected in 4-5 districts (probably only about 8 of the folks the unions wanted to send got elected). So this may, also, be an attempt to give the unions another bite at the apple. I'm not sure that's true, but it's one possibility.

The second big difference between this proposal and mine is that this one seats the supers as supers. When the Blue Ribbon Committee says,

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I'm not sure they're aware of how angry people are at the Clusterfuck. Frankly, when I asked

people attending a party with ties to some really important MI constituencies the other night to sign my petition, the chief draw was that it punished the super-delegates who got us into the Clusterfuck. One person said, for example, "the supers ought to be in jail."

Suffice it to say I have a different understanding of what will sour people on volunteering in the fall than the Blue Ribbon Committee does.

Also note that seating the super-delegates will probably net Hillary more delegates than this 10-point differential would. I've long maintained that Hillary is at least as interested in seating the supers as she is in seating the elected delegates.

Kudos, though, to the Committee for throwing Joel Ferguson and his crappy solution under the bus. This...

First, we cannot agree to a remedy that allows for super-delegates who didn't run for the position to have a full vote, while pledged delegates selected by the voters have only half a vote.

... is a sentiment I agree with whole-heartedly. And with the names attached to this letter rejecting Ferguson's proposal, I consider it dead.

I still think my proposal is vastly superior, because it gives the campaigns a reason to support it (the ability to pick some delegates directly), it integrates the results of the April 19 caucuses, and it gives the rest of the country—and the DNC—the feeling that MI has been punished in some manner for breaking the rules.

So sign my petition—and send it to everyone you know in MI.