

To Democrats of Cuyahoga County

I hereby resign as Chairman of the Democratic Party of Cuyahoga County effective August 4, 2017.

When I became the Chairman on June 16, 2010 the Party was in disarray. A number of elected Democrats and other operatives were the focus of highly publicized FBI criminal investigations and Cuyahoga County Democratic supporters were weary of the persistent, often scathing media accounts of public corruption that painted many of our elected officials and Party with impropriety. Our funds were depleted and we were four months away from the mid-term elections for Governor and every other state-wide office, along with the newly created offices of County Executive and Council. Needless to say, it was a challenging time to assume the Party Chair.

When I reflect on those early days of my tenure, I often wonder how we made it through that difficult period. The answer lies in the faith and trust that so many of you, in our Democratic family, placed in me. Our success was the result of many efforts and we went to work to make the needed changes to build an organization in which we could all take pride. We have made substantial and constructive progress these past seven plus years, however I will not take space in this statement to enumerate our record of achievement.

Our Central Committee will be convened in the near term by First Vice Chair Sandra Williams, who will preside over the election of the Chair to serve out my unexpired term. The Ohio Revised Code requires that party officer elections must occur soon after the midterm May Primary when a new Central Committee is elected for each political party. Therefore, in June of 2018, the Central Committee will be convened to elect a new Chair and officers.

I have made it clear over the past year to a number of party officials that I would not seek a third term. It is my hope that stepping down ahead of next summer's required election sets a precedent that a Chair, not seeking reelection, will step aside in

the year before the state-wide midterms. This will facilitate a smooth and seamless transition for the next Chair and allow him/her to be fully engaged and prepared for the critically important midterms by January, 2018.

According to the DNC ByLaws, the First Vice Chair of the Party shall succeed the outgoing Chair for a period of 30 days or until the Central Committee body is convened to vote on a new Chair to complete the existing term. Therefore, State Senator Sandra Williams, will become the Interim Chair.

Whoever is elected to succeed me in the next 30 days will benefit from the additional time to become acclimated to the job and fully prepared to assist in the election efforts with local endorsed municipal candidates this November, the re-election of Senator Sherrod Brown, all of our state-wide candidates next year. When the new Central Committee is convened in June of 2018, they will have a much better sense of the Chair's ability to lead the Party and whether they wish that person to continue.

I believe that it is paramount for the next Chair to continue our successful endorsement process. The Executive Committee is the endorsement arm of the Party and their authority should not be circumvented by the Chair or Officers by steering the endorsement process towards a predetermined result. Such a practice injects privilege and cynicism instead of merit and agreement into our proceedings.

I know empirically, from presiding over numerous endorsements, that an open, fair, and inclusive process achieves acceptance and consensus. Candidates seeking the Party's endorsement must be confident that the Chair and the Party's officers are promoting a competitive endorsement process that allows all candidates to compete on a level playing field. Let our Bylaws be your guide and amend them appropriately when changes are necessitated.

I want to especially thank and acknowledge our officers Sandra Williams, Blaine Griffin, Rudy Stralka, Mamie Mitchell, our past Executive Director Nick Martin, current Executive Director Lillian

Sharpley, and Parliamentarian Sandy McNair. Your time commitment and dedication to our Party and your assistance and counsel to me was invaluable, and I am so grateful that you were with me during this journey.

It has been my privilege to lead and serve the diverse, and at times contentious, interests of our Party. The Democratic Party of Cuyahoga County is back on track and healthy, but it's continued health and progress as always is dependent on all of you. I leave this wonderful and challenging position with the knowledge and satisfaction that I always placed the public service of our Democratic community and its principles before anyone's self-interest. Make that your North Star when you elect your next Chair for the most important and constructive county Democratic Party in Ohio. I know I did.

We have an opportunity for success in 2018 mid-terms and beyond. As painful as the results were in November 2016, it was a wakeup call for our Party to get back to its basic roots of promoting issues that focus on economic justice, job creation and the ability of all Americans to thrive in the middle class with opportunity that moves people up instead of policies that push them down. Quality of life for working people is not an aspiration; it is a right of our American citizenship. Fight for it through your voice and the more voices the better. That is the essence of your Cuyahoga County Democratic Party and I intend to stay involved.

Good Luck and God Bless you and your continued participation and passion in our political elections and civic discourse, as you strive to extend the blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness upon our families, communities and country.

Fondly, and with a full tank of appreciation and gratitude, I respectfully tender my resignation as Chairman of the Democratic Party of Cuyahoga County.

Sincerely,

Stuart Garson

