

34th District Democrats Caucus Debrief Meeting Minutes from April 6th, 2004

Meeting Attendees: Heather Devriez, Shirley Carlson, Dow Constantine, Brian Earl, Walter Sive, Bruce Ecklund, Jackie Dupras, Karen Farnsworth, Steve Karbowski, Heather Woodruff, Sarah Earl, Alan Munro, Claire Foster

Meeting Agenda:

- 1) Discussion of what went well
- 2) Discussion of what could be improved-Including organizational issues that could affect other activities and recommendations to the State Party.
- 3) Brainstorm methods to recapture and retain in the organization people who are excited and energetic from the caucuses.

Meeting Summary:

- Sarah Earl and Heather Devriez are available if a report needs to be made at the May 12th meeting. They will also set up and man a table with comment cards that people can fill out so that we can add to the lists below. Copies of this report will be available.
- Suggestions for State Party-Sarah will get with the State Committee Representatives to discuss the list. We wish to get these recommendations to the State Party prior to the state convention. Maybe these ideas will help them.
- Suggestions for the E-board-There are recommendations for a lot of work here. Some people present expressed an interest in perhaps continuing to work on some of the recommendations listed. Sarah will find out who is willing to commit and then work with Kathy and Jo Johnson to implement.
- Suggestions for the Next Caucus Planning and Credentials Committees-No action is required except to publish these on the private website so the information is available if and when we have a caucus again.

Things That Went Well

A lot of people attended
Most people felt like the process was fair
Mailer was informative and timely
Refreshments were excellent
Speakers were excellent
Venue worked well
Website was helpful
Letting people talk about issues as a diversion was a good idea
Having a strong chair helped
Having a parliamentarian in front helped
Using the dots for the resolutions worked well

Suggestions for State Party

Need to have training for Caucus 101 and Credentials 101. Recommend the training occurs right after the Precinct Caucus so that there is time to plan. Recommend making the training a regional road show.
The credentials process needs to be computerized. We need the state party to create a program so it has credibility.
A knowledgeable representative from the State Party would be helpful for questions.
The rule about whether people can switch during sign-in is ambiguous. This needs to be clarified.
Strongly recommend that the script and rules be on the same piece of paper to ensure they match each other. Separating them was very confusing.
The sub-caucus rules should be able to be changed if there is a motion, a second and a passing vote. Some of the bigger groups want to do this so they would not have 3 hours of speeches.
The form given to the delegates at the end had no address of where to send the form on it.
The credentials process is confusing, cumbersome, and hard to explain. There must be a better way to assign delegates than looking at the whole numbers and then the decimals.

Suggestions for E-Board

Need a volunteer coordinator to ensure excited people are plugged in.
Need to brainstorm for a really cool event which will allow people to get their hands dirty to help beat Bush. The event should be social with perhaps a continuing education feel to it.
Personally contact each delegate. Thank them for participation in the caucus and invite them to the really cool event. (See above). There should also be a specific call to action for their participation. "Can you help on Saturday at 10:00 am."
Send a list of Democratic events to everyone who went to the caucus. Should include candidate events and other organization's events as well.
Recommend that the committee reports come at the end of the meetings, if they are needed. This way a small amount of time can be given to people who want to discuss their issues.
Recommend a volunteer job fair where we invite lots of organizations to come and ask for help with very specific projects. Perhaps this could be part of the cool event mentioned above.

Suggestions for Next Caucus Planning Committee

Amplification-The delegate selection sub-caucuses need some sort of amplification. A PA system is too much. Perhaps bullhorns.
Planning Lead-time-Need more time to plan-Recommend starting 3 months in advance
Question Table-Need a questions/exception table with a rules expert seated there the entire time. Need a big sign so people know where to go. A laptop tied into the credentials database should be available. They should have forms to fill out if information needs to be passed to the credentials committee.
Walk-Thru-Make sure credentials chair goes through site walk-thru.
Precinct Lookup-Need a table where people can look up their precincts. The table should be staffed. Recommend that this is a different table than the question table.
Sign-In Flow-Initial Sign-in needs to flow better. We had too many bottlenecks. Recommend funneling people in through different doors. Not sure what to do about rain. Make sure the signs for sign-in are very large and very clear.
Campaign Representation-Make sure there is a campaign representative on the Caucus Planning Committee
Visibility of Process-The credentials count needs to be visible so people know how many people are there and how many delegates and alternates there are for each candidate. Either a large sign or perhaps a computer projector tied to the computerized database. Easy to do if the credentials process is computerized.

Suggestions for Next Caucus Planning Committee (Cont.)

Delegate Preparation-Create a process map to give to the delegates as they arrive. Include approximate times of when things are going to happen. (See an engineer for help with process map if needed)

Sub-Caucus Preparation-Okay to let sub-caucuses handle their own stuff including the count, but there needs to be a process map of what to do. They should also have a non-biased person who is with them the whole time to help guide them. Think Julie from the Loveboat.

The campaigns would like more time to speak. We gave them 5 minutes this year. Seems like a good diversion while the credentials committee works.

Make sure there are forms for the sub-caucuses to complete with delegate information. Not the forms the state provides, but forms that will go to 34th Dems.

Suggestions for Next Credential Committee

Computerize Process-Make sure the process is computerized. Recommend a simple spreadsheet or database with laptops networked together. Planning should start well in advance (one year?) so it can be thoroughly tested. The state may have a program by then.

Sequester Credential Team-Credentials committee should be sequestered with a runner who will ferry resolved questions from the questions table to the credential committee. When a change needs to be made to the credentials because an issue was resolved, the question table should complete a form that will be given to the credentials committee by the runner. This will eliminate verbal instructions and scraps of paper so that a paper trail of changes can be maintained. The runner should also keep an eye on the proceedings in the main room and alert the credentials committee as the agenda proceeds.

Switching Preferences-Read the names of the people who switch preferences first then announce credentials in case there are errors.

Volunteer Training-A dry run of the credentials process should be held in advance with all volunteers attending. Have back-up volunteers just in case someone can't make it.

Questions to Be Sure You Can Answer (This may seem intuitive, but believe us, finding the answers were not that easy on the fly.)

Based on the number of delegates, how many alternates should be elected? Answer should be included in the process flowchart.

How do you get an equal number of men and women? Do you have to or is this just a recommendation? What if an odd number of delegates are required? Answer should be included in the process flowchart.

How do you handle proxy votes for people that need to leave and want someone to vote for them? Make sure you include the answer on the process flowchart sheet mentioned above.