

Bernie 2016
P.O. Box 905
Burlington, VT 05402

April 21, 2016:

Dear Senator Sanders:

Each of the millions of Americans who have voted in this year's Democratic primaries and caucuses surely expected that their votes would help determine the party's nominee for President. However, recent press reports suggest that the intense competition for convention super delegates and delegates is in danger of injecting a new element, "delegate buying," into the contest. Common Cause calls on you and all presidential candidates to refrain from giving any gifts to super delegates and delegates. Engaging in a bidding war in an attempt to buy super delegates' and delegates' votes undermines trust in our democracy, and trying to buy their votes is undemocratic.

We urge you and any entities and individuals associated with you or your campaign to pledge not to provide gifts, travel, food, or anything else of value to super delegates and delegates in an attempt to sway their votes in advance of or during this summer's Democratic convention in Philadelphia. We also urge your support for an addition to the convention rules expressly prohibiting gifts to super delegates, delegates, and alternate delegates by candidates, candidate committees, political action committees, 501(c) organizations, corporations, and entities directly or indirectly attempting to influence the votes of super delegates, delegates, and alternate delegates. While providing reasonable reimbursement costs to these individuals for travel expenses associated with the convention could be appropriate, these reimbursements must be publicly disclosed by you, the candidate.

Just as currying favor with voters by showering them with gifts is illegal, trying to win the support of super delegates' and delegates' votes should follow a similar standard. Federal Election Commission delegate rules were established long before the creation of super PACs and offer little guidance about how these groups, as well as how candidates themselves, can influence super delegates and delegates. While outright bribery is clearly illegal, providing gifts, travel, food, and other benefits to super delegates and delegates raises significant questions about undue influence in a process that should be free from favors and gratuities. Super delegates and delegates should instead decide which presidential candidate to support on one's merits, not the one who can lavish the most expensive gifts.

We therefore ask that you publicly take this pledge:

I, _____, publicly pledge not to provide cash, gifts, travel beyond reasonable reimbursement costs for attendance at the convention, food, and/or other tangible or intangible gifts to super delegates and delegates. Any entities and individuals associated with my campaign will not attempt to win the votes of super delegates and delegates by providing them with tangible or intangible benefits. I will publicly disavow any independent entity supporting my candidacy that provides cash, gifts, travel, food, and/or other tangible or intangible gifts to super delegates and delegates.

In this climate, the lavish wooing of super delegates and delegates will only reinforce cynicism that politics is all about money. Your pledge to voluntarily ban gifts or other support for super delegates and delegates will send a signal to voters that you are in tune with them in this election cycle. Thank you for your commitment to ensuring that elections are decided on experience and ideas, not on the size of one's wallet.

Sincerely,

Miles Rapoport
President
Common Cause