

From: Willie Simmons
Date: July 18, 2020 at 3:16:48 PM CDT
To: Senator Willie Simmons
Subject: Democratic Party Executive Committee

I take this opportunity to congratulate the members of the Mississippi Democratic Party who were recently elected to serve on the State Democratic Party Executive Committee.

As an introduction, I am the only Democrat elected to a statewide or district office during the 2019 General Election. I represent the Central District that consists of 22 counties and over one million citizens.

Today, I am concerned and frustrated with our State Party. It is noted that, excluding judges serving our courts since Reconstruction, only three Blacks (Mike Espy, Bennie Thompson and Willie Simmons) have been elected to a statewide or district position in Mississippi.

During the 2019 election cycle, it appeared that Ms. Amos was silent by the Party's leadership and made ineffective in assisting me and other Black candidates on the ticket. It was clear to all of the Black Democratic Candidates that the leadership of the Democratic Party had a knee on our necks and we could not breathe. As a result, all Democrats lost except me.

Today, I am like the late Fannie Lou Hamer, I am sick and tired of being sick and tired. We must all work overtime to ensure that Vice President Biden is elected as our next President of these United States. In doing so, we must fix our Mississippi Democratic Party.

Facts you need to know:

1. The Party did nothing to assist me during my campaign in 2019.
2. Ms. Jackie Amos was the only person from the Party's staff who communicated with me during the entire Campaign and she had no resources to share from the Party.
3. No one from the Party's State Office has contacted me since the Election.
4. I participated in the Democratic State Party Convention but was not invited to address the Convention. It is noted that I followed instructions on how to ask questions during the question and answer period; however, I was never given access.
5. The current State Democratic Party has a serious communication problem.
6. It is noted that the Central District is essential to electing statewide Democrats and Black voters are the super majority of the Democratic Party in Mississippi. If the Party leadership

excludes and disrespects the individuals and/or elected Democrats, we will never have a unified party that yields success.

7. It has been reported that the funds received by the State Executive Committee from the DNC for the 2019 Election were not used to assist Black Democratic candidates, instead it was used to fund a texting program and other activities created by the Party's leadership. This was done while the Black Democratic Candidates were begging for resources to turn out the vote in the General Election. It is for these and other reasons that the Democratic candidates did not win in 2019.

8. In 2019, my daughter, Sarita Simmons and I, as Democrats, defeated Republican challengers in the General Election with no support from the Democratic Party. I served as a Democrat in the Mississippi Senate for 26 years and never received any support from the State Democratic Party. We also played a major role in winning House District 30 for Representative Rosebud, House seat in 2018, and to my knowledge, he did not receive any support from the Party.

9. As a Democrat advocate in the Delta, I was instrumental in electing Democrats like: Congressman Mike Espy, Governor Ray Mabus, Secretary of State Dick Molpus, Attorney General Mike Moore, Bolivar County Circuit Clerk Rosie Simmons (first Black since Reconstruction), Congressman Bennie Thompson, Governor R. Musgrove and many local Democrats in Bolivar County and the Delta.

The aforementioned being said I am very concerned about our Party. The facts appear to suggest that we do not want real inclusion in the Party and discrimination practices are alive and well in the Mississippi Democratic Party. We are suffering from having the knees of members of our own party on our necks and we cannot breathe.

Finally, If we are going to win elections going forward we have to overhaul the Party and revise our mission. I pray that during these trying times we will open our eyes and commit to supporting and electing officials who will change public policies that will remove all knees from the necks of the least of these. We must aggressively support public policies at the local, state and national levels that eliminate inequities and inequalities in all communities.

Today, the Mississippi Democratic Party must have effective leadership that has a commitment to inclusion. I hope you will support Tyree Irving to lead us into the future of inclusion and more Democratic victories!!!!!!

Thanks and as your Democratic Transportation Commissioner, I look forward to working with the Party to make it second to none.

Willie Simmons,
Commissioner Transportation
Central District

On Jul 19, 2020, at 3:24 PM, Bobby Moak wrote:

Dear Commissioner Simmons,

Thank you for expressing congratulations to the incoming executive committee. Many of us are committed to building onto the solid foundation set during my previous tenure. We have known each other more years than either cares to count working in the Capitol, however there are a number of your concerns I must take issue with.

First of all, I understand and am sympathetic to the impulse to embellish, exaggerate and distort certain facts while campaigning. It's something I've seen often in my dealings over the years with Republicans. In this setting, and in conversations with our governing body, the state executive committee, we must strive to keep an honest dialog and avoid the tendencies to mislead members of our own party. There is a known record here, we've saved the receipts and our records do not support a number of the claims you are making.

Secondly, any insinuation that any member of our staff was silenced is false. MDP provided tremendous flexibility to Ms. Amos when she made her departure known, and accommodated employment while she tried to join numerous campaigns. This accommodation is a far cry from silencing - it's laying a path forward for a planned staff departure.

As to your numbered list:

1. During your campaign in 2019, the MDP staff sent you 15 direct emails concerning everything from offering free campaign plans and a virtual campaign manager to training for volunteers and staff.
2. Your campaign did use our MDP data program, and there are numerous records of correspondence dating as early as July 2019 providing technical support to your campaign staff. Every candidate that uses VAN now has something available to them that heretofore was not available as a credible campaign tool. VAN is something we can offer all our candidates from city to statewide office.

This aforementioned support extended right up until late October, 2019 when your campaign requested from the party exports of finalized GOTV lists on 10/28 at 6:46pm.

3. Upon

your election, I personally made contacts and offered congratulations to all who had a successful campaign, and to a great many who did not win. We were able to recruit 600 more democrats to the ballot in 2019 and hold more offices than Republicans in the state. The same can be said for our stealth municipal elections of 2017.

4. As

to not addressing the convention, I believe the 4 CD Chairs met the night before and set a telephone agenda. I was having emergency surgery, so I apologize you did not speak.

5. The MDP has added 1.8 million phone numbers, 70 thousand emails and has 12,000 new social media followers. Weekly communications with every democrat in some form or fashion that entails all of these in addition to media blast are performed several times weekly.

6

There is no question the second district holds more democratic voters than any other. However, voter participation, as recognized by you and noted in your number 7, is a major issue.

7. There was no MDP Program as you described or otherwise. That statement to the contrary is patently untrue

The MDP was able to get a SPIF Grant, but the rules were changed. The MDP only got 20% of the funds and used them for candidate training, VAN, campaign layouts and other necessities - all for candidates. The other \$80,000.00 was directed by the DNC to be given to specified vendors working primarily in the 2nd District counties for voter communication, door knocks and voter turnout.. All candidates in those counties were direct beneficiaries of those funds. The MDP did not have control over these vendors or those funds.

So, the party did not have funds as they had during the 2018 election cycle to enlist 17 thousand volunteers with 22 thousand work stations making 3.5 million phone calls and 500,000 sample ballots by text, or emails. Whomever gave you information contrary to that, as laid out in your number 7, is not credible. The MDP did not have funding to do such as you suggested.

8 Every

candidate in the 2019 election was provided opportunities to have training for volunteers, help in fundraising, campaign design and campaign management. That is on record with the party. As to the Rosebud race, the party printed sample ballots, made email blasts, and performed thousands of calls, especially, at critical times like the day before and the early morning of the election cycle. That same game-plan was later used in the City of McComb to elect a majority of Democrats to the City Council. To say the MDP did

not help is not seeing, being aware, or cognitively dissonant of these assets performed in that race

9 There is no doubt that you are a strong democratic advocate.

As to revamping the party, over the past four years:

- a) We increased from 3 to 16 the number of young democrats on the executive committee.
- b) For the 1st time approximately \$80,000 sent back to county parties for local rebuilding (MDP Grant Program).
- c) Revamped the Yellow Dog Program and split funding with county parties.
- d) Changed the annual event to Hamer/Winter and had several successful events.
- e) Social media followers tremendously increased with staged messaging.
- f) Earle Banks, Admin. Chair, released a plan to hire an Executive Director.
- g) E-mail address list has increased from 3,500 to 69,868.
- h) Fundraising capabilities increased, even with creating a small donor list of 4,317.
- i) A new recognition and respect for our MDP by the DNC and ASDC.
- j) The financial condition of our party is now solid after correcting the same problems that in the past, had this party in Receivership. The same folks that got us there now want to lead and that is a concern.
- k) Performing 1.2 million phone calls with 16,000 thousand volunteers in the 2018 campaign along with nearly 500,000 graphic sample ballots sent digitally over text message. A strategy passionately embraced by both the National Committee and all Presidential Campaigns.
- l) Increasing our telephone list to include 1,220,668 new cell phone numbers.
- m) Awarded every SPIF Grant (\$260,000.00) the DNC has accepted applications for by the MDP.
- n) One of the first 10 states, of only 26 invited, to enter into a joint Biden fundraising agreement.

- o) I personally raised more than \$150,000.00 Dollars for the MDP and DNC.
- p) Voter protection team now under our roof with Fair Fight.
- q) Coordinated fundraising efforts with the Espy Campaign in 2018 and 2020.
- r) A nice and professionally kept office complex to now operate from.
- s) A new outlook by Mississippians for the work of the Mississippi Democratic Party. Folks now want to qualify as democrats and be identified with the party, countering a trend that began before my election as Chair.
- t) Our DNC T-3 (Train The Trainers) volunteer certification program is now ranked 7th in the nation.
- u) Staff are union members, at IBEW Local 903, after a voluntary recognition process by MDP.
- v) The opportunity to actually have a Finance Council once again, with real monied supporters that left long ago after becoming discouraged as to how the Party had been run.

I could go on, but you get the idea. The Party has been brought from a financial disaster. It has gained respect from the DNC as well as local folks that thought they would never come this way again. It's not an organization that should be used to perpetuate something for one's self, but to actually serve everyone.

Sincerely,

Bobby Moak

On Sun, Jul 19, 2020, 5:29 PM willie simmons wrote:

Dear Chairman Moak!

Please know that I never received a call from you during or after the 2019 Election.

It is noted that you did meet with my Primary opponent, Mayor Wallace before the Primary Election in May, 2019. See photo below that was sent to me in May 2019.

I always thought that meeting was inappropriate because Mayor Wallace was my opponent in the Democratic Primary, however, I did not contact you about it.

For the record you never communicated with me during the 2019 Primary or General Election.

It is true you that we have known each other for many years and I am not questioning your service as a State Representative. You and I often worked together as Legislators on issues and I will always be grateful to you for your services as a Legislator.

My comments on yesterday speak to the Democratic Executive Committee and it's flaws, coupled with some issues I as a life long Democrat are concerned with.

Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

