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January 17, 2019

Hon. Byron W. Brown
Mayor, City of Buffalo
Chair, New York State Democratic Committee
420 Lexington Avenue, Suite 845
New York, New York 10170

Dear Mayor Brown:

I have been a State Committeeman for many years, and have served as Assistant Treasurer, Treasurer, and an Executive Committee member. I have never witnessed meetings of the State Committee or the Executive Committee so badly handled as those of October 1, 2018.

You were not the officer wielding the gavel at the time, but you presided over both meetings and as the State Chair bear responsibility for those and future meetings. State Committee members should not be treated as they were. The State Committee leadership should not condone such anti-democratic conduct, such disrespect for well-known rules of order.

I particularly refer to the shouting, gavel-pounding shutdown of both meetings by the Sergeant-at-Arms. He stated, without explanation, that the resolutions advanced by the Progressive Caucus were "too late." He bypassed "New Business" without proper motion or even voice vote, and adjourned both meetings peremptorily.

I have not seen any media write-ups on the meetings. That is lucky, because they were at total odds with the openness and esprit which should characterize, and be encouraged at, the State Committee.

A letter critical of the conduct of the October 1 meetings has been circulated, and many signatures have been obtained. I have not signed it because I do not agree with some of it. But I endorse its tone and conclusion: such anti-democratic meetings must not occur again, and procedures and planning must be put in place so they do not.

Among other measures, I strongly urge that, at the next State Committee meeting:

You, or Christine Quinn should apologize to the Executive Committee and to the full State Committee for the conduct of the October 1 meetings, preferably with specifics which appear in the letter/petition;

You, or Christine Quinn, should preside over both next meetings, and should continue to do so unless and until another officer demonstrates the judicial temperament and openness required to chair such meetings;¹

You, or Christine Quinn, should announce that henceforth Roberts Rules of Order will be observed and followed at all Executive Committee and full State Committee meetings, unless a motion is made and carried by vote to dispense with a particular Rule;

You should announce that a diverse group will be formed: to analyze, deal with, and recommend appropriate party rules and Bylaw revisions; how to insure full presentation and discussion and vote on resolutions; and how to decrease the number of the appointed members of the State Committee as the National Democratic Committee has done, to fashion and present a more democratic and less controlled State Committee.

During the past year, I have sent letters to the State Committee on related matters, and have volunteered for such a committee, without response. It would be good to provide for at least a nominal letter, email, or fax response to letters from members. Thank you.

Sincerely,



William S. Greenawalt
State Committeeman, 92nd Assembly District

cc: Geoff Berman, Executive Director

¹ For example, a former counsel to the state Committee effectively chaired part of many meetings. He exhibited openness and adherence to democratic procedures, but got resolution and results. Each of us has a different style and manner of dealing with stress and controversy.