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Michigan for Revolution calls out Michigan Democratic Party for rule-breaking during party elections, files formal appeals

In an effort to require the Michigan Democratic Party (MDP) to adhere to its own rules, Michigan for Revolution, a Bernie Sanders-inspired grassroots organization with over 25 locally-organized chapters that have sprung up since December, has filed five appeals with the MDP's Appeals Committee regarding violations of rules and procedures at its latest convention.

On February 11, the MDP held its Spring Convention at Detroit's Cobo Hall. The convention was open to the public. Over 5,000 people attended, more than double the number at its last convention (2015), including over 500 members of Michigan for Revolution (M4R).

The party was unprepared for the turnout. M4R member Nathaniel DuPhene, an organizer with Grand Rapids United Progressives, filmed the crowd of hundreds waiting to be credentialed. Many attendees, stuck in line up to four hours, missed important votes. Democrats met in overcrowded rooms, where meetings and elections were often poorly run by MDP officials who appeared unfamiliar with their own rules.

M4R alleges more than 20 serious violations occurred across four Congressional District (CD) caucuses at the Convention -- CD3 (Grand Rapids, Battle Creek), CD5 (Flint, Saginaw and Bay City), CD12 (portions of Wayne and Washtenaw counties) and CD13 (Wayne, Westland and parts of Detroit). Convention veterans and newcomers alike commented on the chaos, which escalated as party officials continued to break the rules, even as M4R members attempted to correct them.

Offenses included changing rules minutes before holding an election, electing SCC officers without a quorum, and failure to use proper election procedures, disenfranchising many voters. Many of the rules broken exist specifically to ensure minority groups can win proportional representation, and newcomers can participate equally -- key Democratic Party values. One newcomer left early, frustrated by the gauntlet of broken rules; another intended to run for election, but declined due to the atmosphere in her caucus.

The appeal in CD13 also documents apparent voter intimidation and civil rights violations.

Despite these barriers, M4R-backed candidates won 65 high ranking Democratic Party offices, including Progressive Caucus Chair and 50 seats on the MDP State Central Committee.

Michigan for Revolution members knew the rules; Democratic Party officials appeared not to. In fact, since the convention, Democratic Party officials in CD7 (Lansing, Sylvania, Monroe) have reviewed the rules and admitted M4R claims were correct on every point, swinging five more SCC seats to Michigan for Revolution.

The appeals, filed February 24th, assert similar violations caused M4R-backed candidates to lose many additional seats on the MDP State Central Committee, the party's highest governing body.

“Michigan for Revolution arrived at the MDP Convention ready to participate in the process in good faith and according to the published rules,” said M4R member Liano Sharon, who filed the appeals on Friday, “and that’s what we did. We’re optimistic the appeals process will be fair and transparent. Regardless of the outcome, we will continue organizing across the state to elect bold progressive candidates at all levels of government.”

Michigan for Revolution shares many Democratic Party values, including a \$15/hr. minimum wage indexed to inflation, universal single-payer healthcare, the right to unionize, and unrestricted ballot access. M4R also believes that democracy requires transparency, money is not speech, corporations are not people, and elections will never be fully free and fair until big money is banned from politics. Michigan for Revolution has proposed amending MDP bylaws to further these and other progressive goals.

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