

December 12, 2016

Dear Miami-Dade DEC Member:

My name is Stephen Bittel and I'm running for State Committeeman of the Miami-Dade DEC, with the intention to run for Chair of the Florida Democratic Party. I'm running at the urging of fellow party activists who are as frustrated as I am by the results of this past election. At this crucial moment in our country's history, our party needs bold leadership that knows how to get things done.

We all know what we need to do at the party:

One, we need to refocus on the issues and lead with our values. The party of FDR, LBJ, JFK, and BHO has a simple message: everyone who works hard and plays by the rules should be able to get ahead. We should fight the special interests who would perpetuate a broken system that has left too many people facing crippling economic insecurity. And we should never back down on issues of justice and common decency.

Two, we need to invest in year-round grassroots capacity, expanding our reach across the state by building up our DEC's and making the party more accessible by staffing offices outside Tallahassee. A true coordinated campaign is necessary to succeed at all levels of the ballot.

Three, we need to invest in our people. Our staff and vendors should be the most talented and inclusive group this state has ever seen. Our candidates, up and down the ballot, should be well-chosen, well-trained and well-supported. Our Democratic voters should be trusted to decide primaries. Our base of DEC activists, the heart of our party, should be empowered and respected.

Underlying these needs is the urgency of growing our resources, by diversifying our fundraising base and bringing in new donors at all levels with a truly professional operation. And it all starts with a top-to-bottom review of the organization, its purpose, goals and bylaws.

I'm running to bring the leadership we need to put these plans into practice.

I get why people who don't know me would be skeptical of my candidacy. I have been fortunate in my business endeavors. Years ago I started a small real estate company out of my house and through hard work and some good luck built a much larger company, of which I am extremely proud. Listen, if I was in their position, and that's all I knew, I'd be skeptical too. Precisely for that reason I'm looking forward to this opportunity to talk to my fellow Democrats so that you understand why I'm running, and how I plan to be the leader we need at this moment to build the Florida Democratic Party we all want.

Like many of you, I've been in this battle a long time. I stuffed envelopes for McGovern. I organized buses for Carter. I fought for the class size amendment, took on for-profit charter schools, and worked to extend early vote hours. I have been actively involved in the DNC since 2009 and have worked with a group of other donors who push the party to embrace its progressive values.

I am a true believer. I am honest to a fault. And I've never shied away from a fight worth having. That likely describes you too.

As Democrats, we're all about fighting the good fight. What we need now is an organization to match our spirit. This race for FDP Chair provides an opportunity to discuss these and other issues, hear what's on your mind, and talk about how we get things done. Democrats, let's get started, and let's not quit until we've built, together, a Florida Democratic Party we can all be proud of: a party that leads with its values and has the heart and the discipline to start winning again.

Sincerely,

Stephen