

FOREVER FORWARD

I received this statement from Bernie Sanders by email today, and I feel it is important to share the entire message. If you contributed or signed up with his campaign, you may have received one too.

"I am writing you today to express my deep pride in the movement – the political revolution – you and I have created together over the last 15 months. When we began this historic campaign, we were considered fringe players by the political, economic and media establishment. Well, we proved them wrong.

We showed that the American people support a bold, progressive agenda that takes on the billionaire class, that fights for racial, social, economic and environmental justice and that seeks to create a government that works for all of us and not just the big campaign donors.

We mobilized over 13 million voters across the country. We won 23 Democratic primary and caucus contests. We had literally hundreds of thousands of volunteers across the country. And we showed – in a way that can change politics in America forever – that you can run a competitive national grassroots campaign without begging millionaires and billionaires for campaign contributions.

Most importantly, we elevated the critical issues facing our country – issues the establishment has pushed under the rug for too long. We focused attention on the grotesque level of income and wealth inequality in this country and the importance of breaking up the large banks who brought our economy to the brink of collapse. We exposed our horrendous trade policies, our broken criminal justice system, and our people's lack of access to affordable health care and higher education.

We fought aggressively to address the crisis of climate change, the need for real comprehensive immigration reform, the importance of developing a foreign policy that values diplomacy over war, and so much more.

We have shown throughout this election that these are issues that are important to voters and that progressive solutions energize people in the fight for real change. What we have accomplished so far is historic – but our work is far from over.

This movement of ours – this political revolution – must continue. We cannot let all of the momentum we have achieved in the fight to transform America be lost. We will never stop fighting for what is right.

It is true that in terms of winning the Democratic nomination, we did come up short. But this election was never about me or any candidate. It was about the powerful coming together of millions of people to take their country back from the billionaire class. That was the strength of our campaign and it will be the strength of our movement going forward in the months and years ahead.

In the coming weeks, I will be announcing the creation of successor organizations to carry on the struggle that we have been a part of these past 15 months. I hope you will continue to be involved in fighting to transform America. Our goal will be to advance the progressive agenda that we believe in

and to elect like-minded candidates at the federal, state and local levels who are committed to accomplishing our goals.

In terms of the presidential election this November, there is no doubt that the election of Donald Trump as president would be a devastating blow to all that we are fighting for. His openly bigoted and pro-billionaire campaign could precipitate the same decades-long rightward shift in American politics that happened after the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. That rightward shift after Reagan's election infected not just politics as a whole but led to the ascendancy of the corporatist wing of the Democratic Party – an era from which we are still recovering.

I cannot in good conscience let that happen.

To have all of the work we have done in elevating our progressive ideals be dashed away by a complete Republican takeover of Washington – a takeover headed by a candidate that demonizes Latinos, Muslims, women, African Americans, veterans, and others – would be unthinkable.

Today, I endorsed Hillary Clinton to be our next president. I know that some of you will be disappointed with that decision. But I believe that, at this moment, our country, our values, and our common vision for a transformed America, are best served by the defeat of Donald Trump and the election of Hillary Clinton.

You should know that in the weeks since the last primary, both campaigns have worked together in good faith to bridge some of the policy issues that divided us during the election. Did we come to agreement on everything? Of course not. But we made important steps forward.

Hillary Clinton released a debt free college plan that we developed together which now includes free tuition at public colleges and universities for working families. This was a major part of our campaign's agenda and a proposal that, if enacted into law, would revolutionize higher education in this country.

Secretary Clinton has also publicly committed to massive investments in health care for communities across this country that will increase primary care, including mental health care, dental care, and low-cost prescription drug access for an additional 25 million people. Importantly, she has also endorsed the enactment of a so-called public option to allow everyone in this country to participate in a public insurance program. This idea was killed by the insurance industry during consideration of President Obama's health care program.

During the Democratic platform proceedings in St. Louis and Orlando, we were victorious in including amendments to make it a clear priority of the Democratic Party to fight for a \$15 an hour federal minimum wage, expand Social Security, abolish the death penalty, put a price on carbon, establish a path toward the legalization of marijuana, enact major criminal justice reforms, pass comprehensive immigration reform, end for-profit prisons and detention facilities, break up too-big-to-fail banks and create a 21st century Glass-Steagall Act, close loopholes that allow big companies to avoid taxes by stashing their cash in offshore tax havens and use that revenue to rebuild America, approve the most expansive agenda ever for protecting Native American rights and so much more.

All of these progressive policies were at the heart of our campaign. The truth is our movement is responsible for the most progressive Democratic platform in the history of our country. All of that is the direct result of the work that our members of the platform committee did in the meetings and that you have been doing over the last 15 months.

But none of these initiatives will happen if we do not elect a Democratic president in November. None! In fact, we will go backward. We must elect the Democratic nominee in November and progressive Democrats up and down the ballot so that we ensure that these policy commitments can advance. It is extremely important that we keep our movement together, that we hold public officials accountable and that we elect progressive candidates to office at the federal, state, and local level who will stand with us.

As part of that effort, we still have a tremendous amount of work left to do in the Democratic Rules Committee that will be meeting in the coming weeks. We have to enact the kinds of reforms to the Democratic Party and to the electoral process that will provide us the tools to elect progressive candidates, to allow new voices and new energy into the Party, and to break up the excessive power that the economic and political elites in the Party currently have. As with our fights on the platform committee, that will only be possible if we stand together.

You should know that I intend to be actively campaigning throughout this election season to elect candidates who will stand by our agenda. I hope to see many of you at events from coast to coast. In conclusion, I again want to express my pride in what we have accomplished together over the last year. But so much more must be done to make our vision a reality. Now more than ever our country needs our movement – our political revolution. As you have throughout this historic campaign, I ask for your ongoing support as we continue through the fall and beyond.

On a personal note, I cannot say with words how appreciative Jane and I are of the kindness, dedication and love we experienced from so many people across the country. We are deeply touched by it and will never, ever forget it.

*Forever committed, forever fighting, forever forward,
Bernie Sanders"*

There is no need to add to or comment on what he said. I agree.

--cosmicrat 7/12/2016

(Unfortunately, we did not succeed in defeating Trump in 2016, but Bernie's words still ring true in 2021)