

December 16, 2017

Tom Perez
Chairman
Democratic National Committee
430 South Capitol St SE
Washington, D.C. 20003, U.S.

Dear Chairman Perez,

We, the undersigned Arab American Democrats, write to express our collective disappointment over your decision to remove Arab American civil rights leader Dr. James Zogby from the Executive Committee of the Democratic National Committee.

Dr. Zogby has served on the Executive Committee of the DNC since 2001, representing our community in a leadership role at the DNC through one of our nation's most challenging times. His leadership and voice at the table during a time when our community was targeted by those who seek to divide was imperative, and helped create a home for Arab Americans in the Democratic Party.

Since his appointment, Dr. Zogby worked to ensure the voices of those who are excluded are heard, that challenging issues are debated, and that the Democratic Party is democratic.

We firmly believe removing Dr. Zogby from the Executive Committee was a mistake. We further believe removing him during a time when anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bigotry is not only increasing across the country, but being solidified, is unconscionable.

Today, there are an estimated 3.7 million Arab Americans living in all 50 states. Concentrated in key electoral states including Florida, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, over half of all Arab Americans identify as Democrats. Arab Americans have a high rate of political participation, a point that our community has long taken pride in. These facts further exacerbate the loss of our sole representative in the leadership of the Democratic Party.

We fought hard to have a seat at the table. Overcoming prejudice, bias, and misunderstandings from both external and internal forces of the party, and we will continue to do so until our voices are again heard in the decision-making processes of the party. As strongly as we feel that this was a mistake that will harm our Party and country, there are steps that can be taken to repair and improve the party's relationship with our community, including:

1. Re-Appoint Dr. Zogby to the Executive Committee of the Democratic Party. Dr. Zogby has long served as a trusted voice of the Arab American community, ethnic communities, and progressives, and his position at the table should be restored.
2. Increase the representation of Arab Americans on the DNC's standing committees. By ensuring that Arab Americans are represented in the Credentials, Platform, and Rules committees, the party can help safeguard the inclusion of this key demographic while sending a message to the rest of the country that when forces seek to divide, our party unites and stands stronger.

3. Improve outreach to and engagement with Arab Americans across the country.
4. Actively work to recruit Arab Americans to work in key positions at the DNC.

We are Democrats because we believe that diversity and inclusion make for a stronger democracy, and that when we work together we lift everyone up. This remains our party, and we rely on you as its committed leader to chart an inclusive, effective course in putting our country back on track.

We look forward to working with you to remedy this situation and to increase your engagement with the Arab American community. For follow-up, please reach out to Nadia Aziz at ArabAmericanDemocrats@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Arizona

Matt Heinz
Arizona House of Representatives (2009 – 2013)

Representative Athena Salman
Arizona House of Representatives, District 26

Tim Sultan
President, Democrats of Greater Tucson

California

Amira Abed
Delegate, California Democratic Party, District 68

Sara Abed
Delegate, California Democratic Party, District 68

Rashad Al-Dabbagh
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2012, 2016
Delegate, California Democratic Party, District 65
Chair, Arab American Democrats of Orange County

Hussam Ayloush
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2012
Executive Board Member, California Democratic Party
Delegate, California Democratic Party

Estee Chandler

Sara El-Amine

Basim Elkarra
Trustee, Twin Rivers Unified School District Board of Trustees

Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2012
Executive Board Member, California Democratic Party
Chair, Affirmative Action Committee, California Democratic Party

Hosam Haggag

Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2018
Northern Vice Chair, Arab American Caucus, California Democratic Party
Delegate, California Democratic Party, District 25

Sam Hindi

Mayor, Foster City, California
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2016
Delegate, California Democratic Party

Mirvette Judeh

Executive Board, California Democratic Party, District 65
Delegate, California Democratic Party, District 65

Basem Manneh

Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2012, 2016

Rima Nashashibi

President, Newport Beach Women's Democratic Club
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 1988, 1996, 2000
Former Vice Chair of California Democratic Party
Former Vice Chair of Orange County Democratic Party
Former Southern California Vice Chair of the Democratic Party's Arab American Caucus
Former Executive Board Member of the CA Democratic State Central Committee.

Ali Saleh

Delegate, California Democratic Party
Councilmember, Bell, California
Former Mayor, Bell, California

Ahmad Zahra

Second Vice Chair, Arab American Caucus, California Democratic Party

Iyad Alfalqa

Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2016
Chairman, Arab American Caucus, California Democratic Party

Samila Amany

Central Committee Member, California Democratic Member
Delegate, California Democratic Party, District 74

Rohnda Ammouri

Shadi Matar

Connecticut

Thomas Saadi
City Councilman, Danbury, Connecticut, 4th Ward;
Leader, Danbury City Council Democratic Caucus.

District of Columbia

Edward Ayooob

Sarah Badawi

The Honorable Ed Gabriel
Former Ambassador

Samer Khalaf

Denyse Sabagh

Omar Tewfik

Florida

Neal Abid

Carol Mackoul
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 1988, 1992, 1996
Former State Committeewoman

George Mackoul
Former State Committeeman

Janan Smither
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2004

Hawaii

Representative Mark Hashem
Hawaii House of Representatives, District 18

Illinois

Mazen Asbahi

William Haddad
Chairman, American Middle Eastern Alliance

Samir Khalil

Camille Odeh
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 1988

Miriam Zayed
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2004

Hassan El-Tayyab
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2016

Ahlam Jbara

Clem Balanoff
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2016
Representative, Illinois House of Representatives Member 1989-1995

Iowa

Newman Abuissa
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2004
Platform Chair, International Subcommittee, Iowa Democratic Party

Colette Brodersen

Maher Josephson
Central Committee, Johnson County, Iowa

William Pusateri

Valerie Smith
1st Vice Chair, Linn County, Democratic Central Committee, IOW
Member, Iowa State Rules Committee, 2016

Jason Weeks

Kentucky

Mayor Teresa Isaac
Former Mayor of Lexington, Kentucky

Maryland

Maya Berry
Platform Standing Committee Member, Democratic National Convention, 2016
Delegate, Alternate, or Standing Committee Member, Democratic National Convention, 1992,
1996, 2000, 2004, 2012, 2016

Sam Shihadeh
Commissioner, Maryland commission on Middle Eastern Affairs

Deborah Trent

Massachusetts

Noor Dughri

Shain Shain
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2004

Ashraf Hegazy
Delegate, Massachusetts Democratic Convention, 2006
Former Chair, Somerville Human Rights Commission

Michigan

Sirene Abou-Chakra

Ismael Ahmed
Executive Committee Member, Michigan Democratic Party, District 12
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 1984, 2008, 2012

Abdo Almaklani
Executive Committee Member, Michigan Democratic Party, District 12

Fay Beydoun
Third Vice Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party
Delegate, Democratic National Convention 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016.

Mallak Beydoun
Chair, Arab American Democratic Caucus

Susan Dabaja
City Council President, Dearborn, Michigan

Ghida Dagher

Representative Abdullah Hammoud
Michigan House of Representatives, District 15

Zaineb Hussein

Sally Joseph
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2008, 2012
Former Secretary, Michigan Democratic Party
Former Flint Township Supervisor

Sami Khaldi
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2016
President, Dearborn Democratic Club
State Central Delegate, Michigan Democratic Party
Executive Board Member, Michigan Democratic Party

Fayrouz Saad

Rashida Tlaib
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2012
Former Representative, Michigan House of Representatives, District 6

Dennis Denno

Minnesota

Muhamad Elrashidi
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2016

New York

Debbie Almontaser
County Committee Member, Democratic Party of New York, District 44

Robert Akleh

Khader El-Yateem

Naseem Haffar

David Pollak

New Jersey

Chukri Khorchid

Andre Sayegh
Councilman, Paterson City
County Committee Member, Democratic Party of New Jersey

Ohio

Bassam Khawam

Linda Mansour
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2008, 2012

Basel Yanes

Oregon

Fouad Attia

Pennsylvania

Majid Alsayegh

Mohamed Bakry

Sally Baraka

John (Jack) Hanna
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016
Committeeperson, Indiana County, Pennsylvania Democratic Party
Treasurer, Pennsylvania Democratic Party

Marwan Kreidie
Pennsylvania Chair, National Democratic Ethnic Coordinating Committee
Delegate, Democratic National Convention 2016

Martyn Miller

Sayed Omran

Gamal Sherif

Danny Bauder
Former President, Pennsylvania Young Democrats

Rhode Island

Hon. Thomas Lazieh
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 1992
City Democratic Committee

South Dakota

Samir Abu-Ghazaleh
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 1992

Texas

Claudia Baba
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2004

Rania Batrice

Hatem Natsheh
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2016
Vice President, Circle C Democratic Club

M Emad Salem
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2016
Committeeman, Texas Democratic Party, District 10
Leadership Council, Tarrant County, Texas

Virginia

Brenda Abdelall

Hady Amr

Nadia Aziz

Hanna Hanania
Delegate, Democratic Party of Virginia, 2016

Omar Humadi

Yasmin Hussein

Delegate Sam Rasoul
Virginia House of Delegates, District 11

Houeida Saad

Helen Hatab Samhan
Mason District Democratic Committee

Saba Shami
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2008
Fairfax County Democratic Committee

Washington

Devon Abdallah
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2012

Majid Al-Bahadli
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2008, 2012, 2016
Washington State Sub Chair to Democratic National Convention, 2016

Yulia Issa
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 2016

West Virginia

The Honorable Nick Rahall
Former U.S. Congressman, 1977- 2015
Delegate, Democratic National Convention, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004,
2008, 2012