

Sheriff's deputies called to Nevada Democratic Convention to preserve Clinton victory

Patrick Martin
16 May 2016

The Nevada state Democratic Convention broke up in chaos Saturday after the pro-Clinton chairwoman, Roberta Lange, declared Clinton had a narrow majority of delegates. The announcement came after 58 prospective Sanders delegates were ruled ineligible, enough to tip the balance against him.

Armed sheriff's deputies dispersed the convention delegates, numbering several thousand people, after Sanders supporters refused to vacate the Paris Las Vegas Hotel ballroom, where the convention had assembled Saturday morning.

Clinton won the party caucuses in February by a 53 to 47 percent margin, but faced the likelihood of losing her majority among delegates to the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia because of a higher Sanders turnout at county conventions, particularly Clark County (Las Vegas), which accounts for more than half of the state's population.

The same thing happened to Clinton in 2008, when better-organized Obama supporters converted a narrow loss in precinct caucuses into a victory at the state convention. This year, Clinton supporters in the Nevada Democratic leadership intervened to make sure that did not happen again.

A total of 58 Sanders delegates were ruled ineligible because they were not registered Democrats on May 1 or because their personal information was incomplete, a purely technical violation of party rules. Only eight Clinton delegates were disqualified under the same rules. After these delegates were stripped of voting privileges, Lange announced that Clinton had 1,695 delegates to 1,662 for Sanders.

The narrow majority for Clinton meant that the Democratic frontrunner would gain two additional

delegates from Nevada, with the state's 35 elected delegates divided 20-15 instead of 18-17. There are eight other super-delegates from Nevada. Only one is publicly backing Sanders, while four have pledged to back Clinton and three are nominally uncommitted.

The tensions between the two camps were palpable in the course of the debate over delegate qualifications. When Senator Barbara Boxer of California, a leading Clinton supporter, called for unity, she was booed by Sanders delegates. She then replied, "Go ahead, boo yourselves out of this election."

The main representative of the national Sanders campaign, former Ohio state Senator Nina Turner, urged delegates to remain "calm but committed" and not disrupt the convention. "I do understand that you are disappointed. I get it," she said. "But the best way to fight our disappointment is to make sure that we stay here and make sure that Senator Bernie Sanders wins today."

As the proceedings became increasingly contentious, Lange declared the convention adjourned and fled the stage. Several dozen sheriff's deputies then marched in and ordered the delegates to disperse, telling them, "Leave in an orderly fashion. We don't want to arrest people." Then the lights were turned off and the delegates left the premises.

According to reports in the Las Vegas press, the Sanders campaign had elected about 400 more delegates at county conventions than the Clinton campaign and expected to prevail at the state convention, which would have slightly narrowed Clinton's margin in the delegation to July's national convention.

The Nevada convention only underscores the rising

dissatisfaction among Sanders supporters with the heavy-handed approach of the Democratic Party leadership in steering the outcome of the nomination campaign and the running of the national convention in Philadelphia in favor of Clinton, the overwhelming favorite of the party establishment.

Sanders protested last week over the decision of the Democratic National Committee to pack the convention's three main committees with Clinton supporters. While the bulk of the committee members will be chosen proportionally from the two campaigns, the DNC itself selects 25 delegates for each committee, and those it selected included only a handful of Sanders supporters.

The manipulation of the outcome continues in the primary elections to be held Tuesday, May 17 in Oregon and Kentucky. Both are closed primaries, with only registered Democrats permitted to vote, a plus for Clinton, who has won the majority of registered Democrats in most primaries, but has trailed Sanders heavily among registered independents when they have been allowed to cast a primary ballot.

While taking a hard line against the supporters of her self-identified "democratic socialist" opponent for the nomination, Clinton has adopted a much more welcoming approach to conservative Republicans dissatisfied with the presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump.

Her campaign has churned out email announcements to the media trumpeting almost every criticism of Trump by conservative Republicans, particularly over foreign policy, where Clinton seeks to become the consensus choice of the foreign policy establishment in both parties and the military-intelligence apparatus as a whole.

Clinton called attention to the remarks of former secretary of defense Robert Gates, who appeared on the CBS Sunday interview program "Face the Nation," praising Clinton's performance as secretary of state in the Obama administration while criticizing Trump for his unduly soft approach to Russian President Vladimir Putin. "I have some real issues with things he's said about national security policy, and some concerns," Gates said. "I have no idea what his policy would be in terms of dealing with ISIS. I worry a little bit about his admiration for Vladimir Putin."

Another email noted that at the Wisconsin state

Republican Convention, Governor Scott Walker, the notorious right-winger who attacked state public employees and pushed through restrictions on the right to vote, made no mention of Trump in his keynote speech.

Yet another email, from former Bill Clinton and Obama economic aide Gene Sperling, attacked Trump for undermining the confidence of financial markets in the US government by suggesting that a Trump administration might not repay US federal debt at its current market value. Sperling wrote that "there was also no shortage of Republicans who were also left wondering how much damage would have been done to the economy and markets if it had been a President Trump...speculating how he might strategically seek to avoid paying full value on our debt."

Clinton is also positioning herself to be the favored candidate of Wall Street, where Trump is viewed by some as unpredictable and, in his personal business dealings, a poor credit risk. According to reports filed with the Federal Election Commission, Clinton has collected 70 percent of the money donated by employees of the six largest US banks, while the financial sector as a whole is the largest single donor to Clinton's super PAC, Priorities USA Action, accounting for \$26 million.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact