

# The phony “socialist” takeover of the Nevada State Democratic Party

Jacob Crosse  
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On March 6, Judith Whitmer, formerly the chair of the Clark County Democratic Party and a member of the Las Vegas chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), beat Tick Segerblom to become the new chair of the Nevada State Democratic Party. Segerblom is a former state representative and long-time Democratic Party operative. He is also a member of the DSA.

After then chair of the state party, William McCurdy II, announced on February 3 that he would not seek reelection, Segerblom was pressed to run by current Nevada Senator Catherine Cortez Masto. Masto was hand-picked by former Senate Majority Leader and long-time Democratic Senator Harry Reid as his replacement when he retired in 2016.

The media has described the victory of Whitmer—who was endorsed by both the DSA and the Bernie Sanders affiliated “Our Revolution Nevada”—as “socialist” takeover of the Nevada Democratic Party. “Entire staff of Nevada Democratic Party Quits after Democratic Socialist Slate Won Every Seat,” proclaimed *The Intercept*, describing the victory of “insurgent progressives in Nevada” against the Harry Reid machine.

Whitmer is described in recent articles as a “liberal,” “progressive,” “socialist” and “uber-progressive.”

In fact, the victory of Whitmer involves conflicts within various factions of the Democratic Party, with the DSA brought in to provide a veneer of progressivism.

In explaining their endorsement of Whitmer, the Las Vegas DSA chapter tweeted on February 19 that she “demonstrated commitment to her democratic socialist values through her extensive organizing as a member of LVDSA + Left Caucus. She has led the charge to include Medicare for All, Green New Deal, College for All, in the Party Platform.”

That is, Whitmer earned the endorsement of the DSA because she was able to pay lip service to empty political slogans for inclusion in a Democratic Party document that

has no impact on any future candidate or politician.

Joining Whitmer in victory were four other candidates, three of them DSA members, on the self-proclaimed “NV Dems Progressive Slate,” which defeated Segerblom and his “Progressive Unity Slate.” On the latter slate, only Segerblom is a member of the DSA.

Significantly, even though both slates were led by members of the DSA, neither wanted to associate themselves in any way with socialism, instead sticking with the politically empty “progressive” moniker.

The lack of political differences between the “establishment” pick Segerblom and Whitmer was openly acknowledged by all parties involved. The Las Vegas DSA Twitter account plainly stated on March 11, “Our disagreement with Tick [Segerblom] in this race was based on strategy and not political positions. He remains one of the strongest progressive voices in Nevada and a well-loved member of our chapter.”

The victory of Whitmer and her fellow candidates last weekend was followed immediately by the resignation of the entire Reid-loyal staff of the state party, five people. The outgoing faction reportedly prepared for the defeat by transferring nearly half a million dollars out of the party’s accounts and into the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC).

The “Reid machine” is a web of corruption, with the long-time senator and his family at the center. Masto served as the chair of the DSCC from 2019–2021 and is up for re-election in 2022. Whitmer and the LVDSA have claimed that Masto requested that she drop out and allow Segerblom to win.

Whitmer’s designation as an “anti-establishment” candidate, however, is entirely manufactured. She is a loyal Democrat who began working for former Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley in 2006 and then as a volunteer for Obama’s 2008 and 2012 presidential campaigns before backing Sanders’ campaigns in 2016

and 2020.

In a revealing interview with the *Las Vegas Sun*, Whitmer explained that her central aim is to strengthen the Democratic Party by balancing the “competing interests between the party’s moderate and progressive wings.”

The rhetorical differences between the various factions within the party, she explained, were inconsequential. “We’re all parts of the same party and we’re all trying to achieve the same goal, which is to elect Democrats... We talked about unity because it’s important and we’re going to do the work to make sure we unify the party.”

Whitmer added: “We need to be doing everything we can to work together, and it’s OK that we have diverse opinions, diverse ideologies. That really doesn’t matter because at the end of the day we’ve got to hold our Democratic seats and we’ve got to elect Democrats. No matter whether they’re progressive, conservative or moderate, every Democrat will agree that we cannot let Republicans take control.”

The fact is, Whitmer isn’t a socialist and neither is the DSA. The whole purpose of the DSA, as Whitmer has clearly stated in multiple interviews since being elected, is to ensure the continued electoral and political dominance of the Democratic Party.

Whitmer was powered to victory via the backing of Sanders-affiliated organizations like “Our Revolution Nevada” and the “Left Caucus,” which she founded and still serves as the “Chair Emeritus.” However, Segerblom is also a DSA member and a member of Left Caucus—a “true comrade” according to the official Twitter account—leaving one to ask: What was this race about?

The real fight is over positions within the Democratic Party, with identity politics and a dash of left-phraseology used to cover for the elevation of an upper-middle class layer into the structure of the party.

A *Nevada Current* article, “The NV Democratic party has some work to do, whoever’s running it,” which was retweeted by the official “Left Caucus” account on March 10, explains that the new leadership plans to “prioritize... a more robust infrastructure for coalition alliances. Coalitions, in party speak, refers to the department of the party that is tasked with specifically amplifying the needs of diverse constituencies like Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian-American and Pacific Islanders within the political campaign to increase turnout among those groups.”

It adds, “Coalitions must become permanent staff positions in the party, with community leaders drawn

from those communities as staff, to correct both historical wrong and aid to ensure the future of the Democratic Party is more equitable.”

In order to remain electorally competitive and foster a layer of upper-middle class supporters along different identities, Whitmer and the DSA will use identity politics and the allure of a select few well-paid state party positions.

The DSA frequently touts its “inside outside” strategy, which it claims is working “outside” the Democratic Party to affect change in the local community while working “inside” the party to “push it to the left” by electing supposed “progressive” or “socialist” candidates.

It is all bunk. The truth is the DSA exists to pull those disillusioned with the capitalist system and all the social ills it produces back “inside” the Democratic Party, thereby smothering any “outside” independent movement of the working class against not only the Democratic Party, but the whole capitalist system.

The two big-business parties are widely hated and reviled by millions of workers and youth who are becoming politically radicalized, having lived through three decades of unending war, two “once in a generation” recessions followed by the genocidal “herd immunity” response of the ruling class towards the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed over 530,000 people in one year.

The maneuvers of the DSA within the Democratic Party are not an expression of the growing opposition among workers and youth, but an effort by the DSA and its leaders to play a more prominent role in the suppression of this opposition.



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