

Deeply Divided Democrats Open Convention in Philadelphia



Philadelphia, July 26 (RHC)-- The recent disclosure of a cache of e-mails revealing party insiders plotting against Hillary Clinton's populist rival, Bernie Sanders, has only heightened tensions between liberal and conservative Democrats as the Democratic National Convention got underway on Monday.

Yesterday, thousands of Bernie Sanders' supporters rallied on Philadelphia's Ben Franklin Bridge, while another group, People For Bernie, are calling for massive civil disobedience at the Democratic Convention if the Convention doesn't "publicly commit to the passage of sweeping democratic reforms within the first 100 days of a new Democratic administration, and, if the party does not abolish the super-delegates, which effectively eliminates the "one-person, one-vote" principle.

The runup to this year's Democratic National Convention has already seen hundreds of demonstrators, with protests much larger than at the Republican convention last week, despite party officials expressed intent to avoid infighting.

Sanders grassroots campaign has re-energized a Democratic party that voters -- and young voters particularly -- are too tied to militarism and the neo-liberal economic policies that have resulted in almost feudal levels of income and wealth inequality in the United States. And with Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump racially-polarizing rhetoric appealing to white men, liberal Democrats had hoped that Clinton would choose as her running mate a progressive Democrat, or perhaps a Latino such as

Housing Secretary Julian Castro.

Kaine's choice as Vice President, former NAACP President Ben Jealous told the Los Angeles Times, confirms "that she intends to run away from, if not betray, the progressive base of the party."

Among a cache of nearly 19,000 e-mails released this weekend by Wikileaks are several in which high-ranking DNC officials scold Sanders and his supporters, and openly discuss outing the Vermont Senator as an atheist to hurt his chances with primary voters.

Addressing the Wikileaks release Sunday, Sanders demanded the resignation of DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who has said she would step down following the convention. On the opening day of the Convention on Monday, however, she was heckled, jeered and booed as she spoke at a morning meeting of her state's delegation.

While the demonstrations so far have not produced the drama of the 1968 DNC, when protesters clashed with 11,900 Chicago police, 7500 U.S. Army troops, 7500 Illinois National Guardsmen and 1000 Secret Service agents over five days, the discontent of voters who say that they feel neither Clinton nor Trump represents their political views, is palpable.

Said a Trump campaign operative: "What's in those e-mails show that it was a clearly rigged system, that Bernie Sanders ... never had a chance."

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