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An Open Letter to Democratic Candidates for Office

October 5, 2008

Dear Democratic Candidate for Office:

We are writing you as Democrats to another Democrat. As a Democratic candidate for office in this historic year, you are in an unique position to help Barack Obama and Joe Biden reverse our nation's priorities.

Unfortunately, the combination of the Obama/Biden campaign's practice until very recently of de-emphasizing use of traditional visual materials such as yard signs, bumper stickers and buttons and the natural tendency of local candidates to be focused on their own races has resulted in a repeat in 2008 of what has been a longstanding problem in Democratic campaigns during Presidential years: uneven levels of coordination between local campaigns and the top of the ticket in many areas and inadequate support for the top of the ticket.

True, there are many areas in which there is strong support for the top of the ticket and vice versa. That may very well be the case in your area. But this Open Letter stresses **the importance of supporting the top of the ticket in very simple ways, such as wearing Obama/Biden buttons, putting Obama/Biden bumper stickers on your car, putting an Obama/Biden sign in your own front yard**, trying to get Obama/Biden yard signs up where your own supporters have yard signs, etc..

Concerned Democrats was formed with goal of raising consciousness among candidates for office about the importance of the use of such Obama/Biden materials, in order to send **a symbolic but important message to everyone who sees you that you support the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States of America.**

Although there are many logistical causes of lack of coordination, lack of support for the top of the ticket also has political roots. It has manifested itself most often when there has been a liberal candidate for President, such as in 1972, 1984, and 2004. This year Barack Obama has articulated a uniquely pragmatic point of view. Barack Obama realizes that the social problems facing rural, suburban and urban American can't be solved in isolation from each other.

Senator Obama is **the real maverick in this race**. He has worked successfully across party lines on nuclear proliferation and other issues. He defied the odds and ran a tough primary campaign during which he and Senator Hillary Clinton made history together. But their efforts and those of their supporters will be nullified if we don't unite to elect Barack Obama as President, Joe Biden as Vice-President, and Congressional and state candidates across this country and state.

This makes it particularly important that all Democratic candidates unite to show the flag for the top of the ticket. That is the best way to build the turnout needed to win up and down the ticket. **This year, undecided rates are still at a high rate, according to recent polls, and many voters are looking for guidance to those persons in public life they know and trust. In your area, that would include you!**

You are in a good position to help voters in your area realize that our local problems can't be optimally addressed without a change in administration in Washington. **However, if voters don't see consistent and visible evidence of your support for Barack Obama, they may mistakenly conclude that you are actually distancing yourself from the top of the ticket.**

Thank you for hearing our concerns. Please feel free to call contact us at any time at mdover@concerneddemocrats.org. We are especially interested in hearing unique ideas as to how you have improved coordination and generated momentum in your area. We will then collate these ideas and share them with you in a follow-up email just prior to election day. We will also share them with the Democratic Party and the Campaign for Change, although I want to make it clear that Concerned Democrats does not represent either of these entities.

From preliminary conversations, one idea has already arisen, and that is for each candidate to say at every possible opportunity, **"If you are supporting me, I would strongly urge you to also vote for the Obama/Biden ticket on election day."**

One day, years from now, all of us who are active in this election will be asked by people close to us, **"What did you do to help elect Barack Obama as President in 2008?"** As a Democratic candidate for office this year, you will be able to proudly point to your candidacy and its important contribution to change in your area. However, I am writing you to ask that you also be able to say that you did whatever was in your power to be help elect Barack Obama and Joe Biden!

Sincerely,

Michael A. Dover
Concerned Democrats