



Chairman Jaime Harrison
Democratic National Committee
430 South Capitol Street SE
Washington, D.C. 20003

May 6, 2022

Dear Chairman Harrison,

On behalf of the Democratic Party of Illinois and our Democratic leaders, it is with great pride that I write to express the Democratic Party of Illinois' intent to play a pivotal role in the Democratic National Committee's nominating process by moving its primary into the "pre-window" contests in 2024 and beyond.

Democrats have to compete and win in the Midwest to win nationally. Illinois represents a true test of what presidential candidates will face across the nation and as an early primary state, Illinois can help strengthen the Democratic Party's presidential candidates in the primary *and* the general elections:

Illinois looks like America. No state matches America's demographics like Illinois. Our borders stretch from the country's third largest city and regional hub of Chicago to the suburbs of St. Louis, through the farming and rural communities that sit at the heart of our state in central and southern Illinois, and to the industrial hubs that run along the Mighty Mississippi.

In each part of our state, you'll find diversity in our people. Whether measured by race, age, income, or education, Illinois remains on par with national averages, just as we were in 2016 when [NPR created The Perfect State Index](#), which considered this exact question and named Illinois the overall winner. And Illinois plays a central role in the history of America's labor movement, a tradition that continues strongly to this day with more than 900,000 proud union households across the state.

Illinois' diversity also makes it competitive. Illinois Democrats span the ideological divide within the Democratic party. In 2016, Secretary Clinton and Senator Sanders came within two points of each other, reflecting the diversity of thought in our primary electorate and the

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importance of giving Illinois Democratic voters a say in the nominating process. And while Illinois Democrats hold majorities today, the state has been competitive in statewide elections throughout the last decade. With a growing population of Republican voters downstate and a partisan battle still present in the Chicago suburbs, Democrats take Illinois for granted at their own peril.

Illinois reflects our values. Illinois is a national leader in some of the most important issues of our time: supporting green energy and creating green jobs, expanding access to healthcare, raising the minimum wage, protecting workers rights, and defending reproductive rights. We have some of the nation's most accessible voting laws with a permanent no-excuse vote-by-mail program, a lengthy early voting window, and a historically well-run Election Day. Finally, with unified and supportive Democratic state leadership in Governor JB Pritzker, Senate President Don Harmon, and Speaker of the House Emanuel 'Chris' Welch, Illinois is well positioned to partner with the DNC to manage the kind of change that comes with an early primary date.

I look forward to the next step in this process and to sharing more about our incredible state with you.

Please contact Abby Witt, the Democratic Party of Illinois' Executive Director, at either [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] with any questions and next steps.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Congresswoman Robin Kelly
Chair, Democratic Party of Illinois