



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on August 27, 2012

Pro-Life Democrats Set to Challenge Abortion Plank at Dem Convention

Pro-life Democrats will continue their efforts to get the party to ease up on its abortion-at-any-cost plank that has been a prominent part of its platform for many years. As reported by [LifeNews.com](#), officials with the Democratic National Committee rejected efforts by a group calling itself [Democrats for Life of America](#) (DFLA) to persuade the party to consider a less aggressive stance on the issue. “Kristen Day, executive director of Democrats For Life of America, says the platform panel refuses to acknowledge any difference of opinion on abortion within the Democratic Party,” reported the pro-life news site.



“For the good of the Democratic Party, we will continue to advocate that the platform language should reflect the true diversity of views within the Democratic Party,” said Kristen Day (pictured, above right), executive director of the DFLA. “Our message is simple: If you are pro-life and a Democrat, you can make a difference, thus the case for recognition. Inclusion can make a critical difference in this fall’s election.”

Day said that if the Democratic Party hopes to broaden its appeal to a majority of Americans “we must recognize the contributions of pro-life Democrats within our party and the diverse position of Democrats on the issue of abortion.” She claimed that nearly a third of Democrats identify themselves as pro-life, and in the 2008 election some 25 percent of Obama supporters said they were pro-life. “These numbers are not trivial,” the DFLA said in a press release. “They exceed many prominent and well-represented constituencies in the party. Electoral success for the party nationwide will depend on the enthusiasm of all Democrats, including pro-life Democrats.”

The DFLA cited abundant statistics from a 2011 Gallup poll demonstrating the need for the Democratic Party to acknowledge that many of its members hold pro-life views. The survey confirmed, for example, that:

- 84 percent of Democrats support informed consent for a woman seeking an abortion.
- 61 percent support parental consent before a minor can get an abortion.
- 60 percent back a 24-hour waiting period prior to an abortion procedure.
- 59 percent support banning partial-birth abortion.
- 49 percent support the requirement that a woman get an ultrasound before an abortion.

In early August pro-life Democrats made their case before the party’s platform committee, which is chaired by former Ohio Governor Ted Strickland, well known for his pro-abortion stance, and includes such pro-abortion members as Nancy Keenan, president of the National Abortion Rights Action League; Massachusetts Congressman Barney Frank, who has a solid pro-abortion voting record; along with California member of Congress Barbara Lee and former Congressman Tony Coelho (California), both with pro-abortion voting histories.



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Among those testifying for the change was Janet Robert, well-known in Minneapolis/St. Paul as the founder of liberal, Democrat-leaning talk radio station [AM 950](#). Melinda Henneberger, the [“She the People”](#) columnist for the *Washington Post*, noted that when it was Robert’s turn to appeal to the intransigent party platform committee, she used her allotted seven minutes “to argue that the party simply cannot win back Congress without Democrats who differ from the ‘08 platform on this one issue.... Robert urged the committee members to prove that Democrats are more tolerant and open-minded than their opponents across the aisle: ‘Republicans are continually telling people they are unwelcome because of who they are, what they believe or where they were born. We are not that party.’”

Prior to the platform committee hearing, the DFLA submitted proposed pro-life language that, it said, was similar to the 1996 Democratic platform and endorsed by former President Bill Clinton. “A growing number of national leaders, including former President Jimmy Carter, former Alabama Democratic Party Chair Joe Turham, and former Congressman and Ambassador Tony Hall all have expressed support for DFLA’s proposed language,” reported LifeNews.

The proposed language reads in part:

We respect the conscience of each American and recognize that members of our Party have deeply held and sometimes differing positions on issues of personal conscience, like abortion and the death penalty. We recognize the diversity of views as a source of strength and we welcome into our ranks all Americans who may hold differing positions on these and other issues.

However, we can find common ground. We believe that we can reduce the number of abortions because we are united in our support for policies that assist families who find themselves in crisis or unplanned pregnancies. We believe that women deserve to have a breadth of options available as they face pregnancy: including, among others, support and resources needed to handle the challenges of pregnancy, adoption, and parenthood; access to education, healthcare, childcare; and appropriate child support. We envision a new day without financial or societal barriers to bringing a planned or unplanned pregnancy to term.

By contrast, the language of the 2008 Democratic Party platform states that the party “strongly and unequivocally supports *Roe v. Wade* and a woman’s right to choose a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay, and we oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right.”

According to [CNSNews.com](#), despite the rebuff by Democratic functionaries, the DFLA and other pro-life members of the party plan to make their presence known during the party’s convention, beginning September 4 in Charlotte, North Carolina. Among the most high-profile of those dissident Democrats will be former pro-life Democratic U.S. Representatives Bart Stupak (Michigan) and Kathy Dahlkemper (Pennsylvania), who will take part in a DFLA-sponsored panel discussion, [“Can You be Pro-Life in a Pro-Choice Party?”](#)

In contrast to the Democratic Party’s pro-abortion platform committee and immovability on the issue of life, the Republican Party announced that pro-life Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell will chair the GOP platform committee, and that its platform will continue to be solidly pro-life. In 2008, the Republican Party platform read, in part: “Faithful to the first guarantee of the Declaration of Independence, we assert the inherent dignity and sanctity of all human life and affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment’s protections apply to unborn children.”



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