



Visit Lake Norman

Lake Norman Convention & Visitors Bureau
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2012 Democratic National Convention (DNC) Summary

August 31-September 6, 2012 (Includes Labor Day Weekend)

Facebook: “Charlotte in 2012- Democratic National Convention”

Twitter: @DNCcft.

Helpful Websites: <http://2012.Democratic-convention.org/> and www.Democratics.org

Table of Contents:

1. Visit Lake Norman Upcoming FY2012 Initiatives
2. VLN’s DNC Activity to Date Timeline
3. Additional Recommendations Based on Past Conventions
4. What to Expect: *Experiences of past Democratic National Conventions.*
5. Economic Benefits & Impact to Area
6. Media Coverage
7. Websites and Videos
8. Democratic Party Profile & Demographics Summary
9. The “People” of the Democratic Party
10. The Democratic Party’s Key Interests & Platform Issues
11. Important Groups in the Democratic Party
12. Democratic Party Demographics
13. DNC 2012: Delegate Updates

Visit Lake Norman Upcoming FY2012 Initiatives:

Visit Lake Norman (VLN) continues to diligently work toward the Democratic National Convention (DNC) coming September 2012. Through much planning, research, and committees of multiple stakeholders, there has been considerable progress made in promoting the Lake Norman area. Below are listing the current initiatives that Visit Lake Norman is spearheading, as well as a timeline of what is already in place or will be ready soon. We have been able to implement what we can in our current budget situation, however many initiatives are stalled due to lack of funding received from the towns.

- VLN implemented a Trip Builder on our site to make planning visits easier, which includes a Google mapping integration in August 2011. Trip builder allows for full packaging with custom options. Visitors are able to plan a full itinerary based on their needs and interests from our local attractions, restaurant, hotel, and event listings online, and have that itinerary emailed to them with

the mapping and driving directions incorporated. This feature will serve as a great tool for the many coming for DNC, as well as for the 40,000 plus monthly visitors on our site. The themes and areas of interest came from collaboration between Visit Lake Norman and a marketing committee of area hospitality and attraction representatives.

- Additional tour packaging specific and available to the convention week only including transportation is being coordinated and negotiated with regional partners, to become available online by the end of October 2011. This packaging will be geared towards bringing groups up to the area that are staying outside of our towns.
- Beginning 12 months prior to the convention (September 2011) monthly press releases will go out that provide tools, resources, information and new initiatives. The press releases need to be sent on a national level. Vocus is the tool used for the process of identifying appropriate publications, newspapers, travel writers, editors, television and radio outlets with full listings of all contacts from the local level to the national including CNN, USA today, the Associated Press and all the previous listed media outlets. The software constantly updates all contacts, media distribution lists, and provides for full tracking of all coverage received, the value of the coverage, all copy of any type of coverage. For this process to occur the Vocus contract needs to be upgraded to higher levels and renewed by September 15 for a full year, a cost of up to \$9,500 yearly. It may be the most important tool VLN has for the DNC as it allows for media communications on the national level of a plethora of things our area has to offer, why they should stay here, what things there are to do, links to the resources, etc. Frequency of releases will be examined 6 months out from convention, and then again 3 months out to assess needs.
- At least full page ad in the Visit Charlotte 2012 guide referencing VLN resources which will be the most widely distributed publication to attendees, delegates, etc. Ad needs to be purchased by August 19, cost is \$9,500 for full page, and two full pages start at \$15,500 depending on placements.
- Hard copy tear-off page maps that will be located in hotels, businesses, attractions, retailers, etc that will help the DNC visitors navigate to areas of interest such as shopping areas, attractions, and boat rentals. The maps will also be available at the convention site. These maps will contain QR codes to help visitors find additional information through their mobile devices. Printing cost: between \$3,900 - \$5,500 and may go up depending on demand. The maps should ideally be in place six months prior to the convention, however will be a great tool for all visitors, meeting, tournament and event attendees. Would prefer to have available by December 2011.
- VLN is in process of working with some of our partners to set up a kick off celebration, tours, and special events throughout the week that will welcome the DNC visitors during that week and keep them here in our towns. Promotion of these should include online, print advertising, media coverage, and partnership coverage with Visit Charlotte.
- VLN has a form online on our website www.VisitLakeNorman.org that businesses may fill out if they have additional services that may be of value to those visitors staying in our towns of Cornelius, Davidson, and Huntersville. All entries will be reviewed and contacted in a timely manner.

DNC Activity to Date Timeline:

Please note that this timeline does not include the multiple emails, sub-committee meetings, and telephone conversations, Charlotte specific committees, back and forth that happened in between these meeting dates.

- 10/27/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website
- 10/26/2011 DavidsonNews.Net Article – Focus Friday
- 10/20/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website
- 10/17/2011 Town of Cornelius Board of Commissioners Town Meeting Update
- 10/16/2011 Charlotte Observer Article– Your Business May Cash In
- 10/14/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website
- 10/12/2011 Charlotte Observer Article – Businesses Needed
- 10/7/2011 Davidson Merchants Meeting – Town of Davidson Presentation
- 10/6/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website
- 10/6/2011 DavidsonNews.Net Article VLN at Davidson Merchants Meeting on DNC & Vendors Needed
- 10/5/2011 North Mecklenburg Rotary Update
- 9/29/2011 Visit Lake Norman Presentation to Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce Leadership Class Retreat
- 9/26/2011 VLN Update to Board of Directors and Town Representatives and Town Managers
- 9/21/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website
- 9/15/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website
- 9/15/2011 Business Today Featured Article: Democratic Convention will bolster LKN, Cabarrus
- 9/14/2011 Business Today/Cornelius Today Hosts Newsmaker Breakfast – How to Capitalize on the 2012 DNC – Sally Ashworth, VLN Executive Director speaker/presenter
- 9/8/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website
- 9/6/2011 DNCC Hosts Kick-Off Celebration in Charlotte
- 9/4/2011 Charlotte Observer Article - Imagine All The People – Front Page of Sunday’s Charlotte Observer
- 9/1/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website
- 8/26/2011 Visit Lake Norman Featured in Charlotte Observer Article
- 8/25/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website
- 8/15/2011 Press Release – Picked Up by Huntersville Herald, The Citizen, and Cornelius Today newspapers.
- 8/15/2011 Presentation to Towns of Cornelius and Huntersville Town Meeting
- 8/12/2011 Trip Builder goes live on website with DNC theme option
- 8/11/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website
- 8/5/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website
- 7/29/2011 DNC Event visitor webpage goes live; including special feature on DNC signed hotels. (<http://www.visitlakenorman.org/visitors/2012-democratic-national-convention/>)
DNC Featured Media Section goes live (articles, press releases, videos relocated).

7/22/2011 Itinerary Builder programming completed, maps integration begins.

7/22/2011 Google Maps Website Integration comes online

7/18/2011 VLN Board of Directors Meeting

7/1/2011 Visit North Carolina marketing contract (parts of this integrated campaign will include DNC coverage in 2012)

7/1/2011 VIP Discount Card for FY2012 issued, including new vendors.

6/27/2011 VLN Board of Directors Meeting

6/3/2011 VLN Update to Towns and Posted on Website

5/31/2011 Visit Lake Norman Featured on Fox News – Democratic National Convention (DNC): Follow the link to Fox News Charlotte’s video - <http://www.foxcharlotte.com/news/top-stories/Reboot-Charlotte-Lake-Norman-Area-Looks-to-Cash-In-on-DNC--122836029.html>

5/23/2011 VLN Board of Directors Meeting

5/16/2011 DNC Media updates sent

5/9/2011 Hotel Power Hour – DNC Information reported to hoteliers

5/4/2011 VLN Marketing Sub-Committees Itinerary Builder Meeting

5/2/2011 Google Maps Integration and Itinerary Builder Programming begins on website

5/1/2011 Website listings building

4/26/2011 Charlotte DNC Directors Meeting

4/26/2011 DNC Hotel Contract Signing (11 area hotels contracted)

4/6/2011 VLN Marketing Sub-Committees Meetings

4/1/2011 Website listings building, added new feature section based on event profiles and research, features for venues for groups and receptions.

3/29/2011 Charlotte Media Mission with travel writers from southeast

3/21/2011 VLN Board of Directors Meeting – Updates given

3/18/2011 VLN Marketing Sub-Committees Meetings begin

3/17/2011 Business Today Article (attached)

3/17/2011 Citizen Article (attached)

3/14/2011 Press Briefing & Updates

3/10/2011 VLN DNC Intern on-board (Researching DNC Event and past events – tracking media, social/online buzz, delegate selections, identifying delegates and super-delegates, etc. Information to assist with marketing sub-committees and market placements)

3/7/2011 VLN Marketing Committee General Meeting/Committee Meetings discussed (Itinerary Builder/Themed Maps Sub-Committees)

3/2/2011 Charlotte Observer Article Featuring Sally, Board Members (and attached) <http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2011/03/02/2092174/officials-get-ready-for-influx.html#storylink=misearch>

3/1/2011 VLN website updates continue to feature venues for groups and receptions

2/24/2011 VLN Marketing Committee General Meeting

2/19/2011 Mooresville Weekly Article <http://moorevilleweekly.com/news/2011/02/convention-will-mean-big-business-for-lake-norman/>

- 2/18/2011 DNC button/link on homepage for vendor inquires:
<http://www.visitlakenorman.org/includes/cms/pages/preview.cfm?pagekey=34FB717F-C23E-60CE-EBF3A016D8072E22>
- 2/18/2011 Herald Article <http://www.huntersvilleherald.com/news/2011/02/17/convention-will-mean-big-business-for-lake-norman/>
- 2/17/2011 WBTV coverage <http://www.wbtv.com/story/14064568/lake-norman-businesses-ready-to-reap-dnc-benefits?redirected=true>
- 2/17/2011 Tourism Power Luncheon Presentation, Highlights on DNC and Impact
- 2/8-25/2011 Navigate Cornelius – Town of Cornelius (Economic Development Committee)
- 2/7/2011 Second Press Release sent
- 2/4/2011 Mecklenburg Times Article (attached copy)
- 2/4/2011 WSOC Interview with Sally on DNC <http://www.wsoc.tv.com/news/26750776/detail.html>
- 2/4/2011 Town Commissioners, Town Managers, VLN Board of Directors Email Update
- 2/3/2011 Business Today Article and post
http://www.businesstodaync.com/Hotels_in_Lake_Norman_and_Cabarrus_to_benefit_from_Democratic_Convention-a-1423.html
- 2/3/2011 VLN DNC Press Release
- 2/2/2011 DNC Formal Announcement for search committee.
- 4/2010 Several Months Prior – VLN worked with DNC Committee and area hotels to pledge rooms for this event–this was required by the convention to entertain the bid. 15,000 rooms regionally had to be guaranteed per contract.

Additional Recommendations Based on Past Conventions:

General Marketing/Marketing Committee –

- Create a distinct experience for visitors and participants that would distinguish our community and enhances our national and international presence. (i.e. Themed Maps and Itinerary Builder Featured Themes)
- Exemplify an inclusive attitude that involves people from across the Lake Norman area, and the State of North Carolina.
- Once we find out who the delegates are, maybe we can send them a “Visit Lake Norman” email promoting the area, recommending our hotels and event opportunities.
- Slogan as Publicity
- Target post-convention, expect that families will continue to visit the region after the convention because it was so highly publicized.
- Good Maps/Multiple Distribution Points (Themed Maps)
- Promotional video, to give visitors an idea of what we offer and a more personal and interactive experience with the area.

Hotels –

- Featured DNC contracted hotels on website, added to special page

- Have running list of room availability at Visitor Center desk to assist with travelers needing rooms and DNC attendees seeking rooms. Uptown hotels are completely sold out; however hotel rooms may be available in suburban areas.

Restaurants-

- Past conventions, restaurants complained about not getting enough business. Partner with local restaurants to offer discounts, coupons, etc. (Make sure that locals can use these discount too)

Events –

- Delegates will arrive at the complex on foot or by bus and need credentials to be admitted.
- Numerous events associated with the Convention will be open to the public. Recommendation: List on Website, event calendar.
- Trip Builder Featured Icon on website form DNC and tagged events, and locations offering discounts/specials
- Convention visitors – who won't all be uptown at the same time – will spend most of their time inside at the various event venues. Uptown restaurants will be open for business – and should be able to easily accommodate local diners as activity on the Convention floor takes place between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Transportation/Traffic–

- Area Tear Away Maps (Hardcopy, website, mobi)
- Bus locations to get to DNC events (Hardcopy, website, mobi)
- Traffic will peak before and after activity before 4 p.m. and after 9 p.m.
- The bottom line is: Uptown will be accessible.
- List Taxi services in the Lake Norman area for people to use. Include taxis from airport.
 - <http://www.lakenormanairporttaxi.com/>
- Include information about public transportation. Research public transportation schedule and see if they could include stops here or try to develop some kind of relationship/connection that could benefit use. CATS—Charlotte Area Transportation System. Handling buses. Schedule. Main Roads? www.charmeck.org
- Partner with rental car services in Lake Norman (I.e. Enterprise Rental Car, etc.). If people do plan to stay the entire weekend, that's almost a week. Some families may look into renting a car.

Media –

- Increase Charlotte presence in Visit Charlotte print/web media
- Photo and B Roll Footage available for Press/Media requests.
- Utilize the local media stations, and reach out to delegates promoting the Lake Norman area before they begin booking hotels in Charlotte.

Volunteers –

- Use volunteers in distribution efforts. If we get volunteers from the Lake Norman area, they could promote the area while volunteering at the convention. They could wear buttons that say “Ask Me for Help” and when delegates ask them for suggestions, they can suggest the Lake Norman area.

Partnerships –

- Partner with Chamber and local business to promote political events, forums and other events that would build hype and bring people to the area.

What to Expect:

Experiences of past Democratic National Conventions.

- Delegates will arrive at the complex on foot or by bus and need credentials to be admitted.
- Hotel rooms may be available in the Lake Norman region, however Uptown hotels will be sold out.
- August and September are generally the busiest months for hotel rooms and hotel prices are traditionally higher during major events. The Democratic National Convention Committee has contracted with a list of hotels included in the original event bid.
- Numerous events associated with the Convention will be open to the public. There will also be hundreds of DNC private parties and functions staged throughout the region that will be closed to the general public.
- There will be more than 100 parties on the opening night of the convention alone and many restaurants and event facilities will be booked and busy with events. Especially in the Uptown area. Some 1,500 private events will take place during the convention.
- There will be exceptional media interest in the 2012 DNC, President Obama is expected to attend. Will Charlotte be affected since we know the Democratic candidate? However, if there will be no effect, it would be great news as Charlotte is not one of the well-known cities, there will be more coverage.
- Because the convention is being held in Charlotte (and not New York, Chicago or one of America’s more well-known cities), there will also be exceptional interest in the host city and surrounding area.
- International media will be interested in Charlotte, the people, the emerging power and importance of the South, the recreation available here and what Charlotte says about America.
- Transportation & Traffic Impacts – expect normal “holiday weekend” type traffic.

- The City of Charlotte and convention planners are working diligently to minimize traffic impacts and ensure that the public is able to carry with the usual daily activities as well as be able to participate in planned events that celebrate this special occasion.
- Security - While there will be some additional screening procedures and security measures in some locations, all uptown residents will be able to access their homes and parking garages. Uptown businesses will be able to remain open with access to employees and customers. When people talk about a “security perimeter,” what they are really talking about are areas around the Convention Center that may require additional screening or security measures.
- While there will be some modest traffic impacts in the uptown area during the Convention, it will not tie up the uptown. Uptown workers should not have difficulties getting to or leaving work, particularly since the main hours of Convention activity (4 p.m. to 9 p.m.) do not correspond with standard morning or evening commute times. The bottom line is: Uptown will be accessible.
- The Democratic National Convention Committee has already contracted with bid hotels, and the DNCC will assign all state delegations, a majority of the media and Democratic family. This is a work in progress and they will be assigning groups throughout the coming months.
- The 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston attracted 10,000 demonstrators. Some peaceful demonstrations are anticipated in the uptown area during the week of the Convention.
- Comments from 2008 DNC in Denver, Colorado:
 - “However, not every business saw the publicity and clients rolling in. Some businesses outside of uptown Denver got much smaller crowds than they expected. The general manager of The Cherry Cricket, in East 2nd Ave in Cherry Creek, said their statistics show they got the same number of clients that they get during a regular week.
 - “We thought it would be busier,” said Kathy Huddleston, explaining how the restaurant and bar were staffed with the same number of employees they have on-hand for busy weekends. Huddleston says guests from a nearby hotel came in to eat, but many of the regular customers didn’t come around. “Some of them stayed away, because they were anticipating crowds. But a lot of them went uptown because they wanted to be a part of history,” she said. “And I can’t blame them!”
 - “Like every convention, some vendors do very well and some just do the average business of the day,” said Scharf. “I think it really depends on your location and what you were offering for this convention.”

Economic Benefits & Impact to Area:

The Democratic National Convention is estimated to have an economic impact of **\$160 million** in direct and indirect spending. Much of that economic activity will be spent on security, transportation, changes to the Convention Center, hotels and private receptions, dinners and functions.

Media Coverage:

In 2008 the Denver convention had between 17,000 and 20,000 domestic and international media providing more television and print coverage of Denver than any other event in history. These stories helped establish Denver as both a business and travel destination.

The period leading up to the convention will generate many stories in the New York Times, Time, Newsweek, Wall Street Journal and others about the logistics of staging the event, the growing political power of the Southern States and the growing economy of the region, while travel and general interest magazines and television shows will look at the city, its people, cultural renaissance, attractions and recreation opportunities.

Websites and Videos:

Here are related website and videos for the Charlotte event:

CNN

- http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/06/06/census.charlotte/index.html?hpt=hp_c2
- <http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/politics/2011/05/12/foreman.charlotte.dnc.cnn?ref=allsearch>
- The first link is Obama's speech on Libya, referencing Charlotte. The other two links include information about why Obama compared Charlotte to Benghazi and when, in his speech, he referenced it. Some blogs consider it good publicity for the DNC and assumed that was why he said it.
 - <http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/politics/2011/03/28/obama.libya.full.cnn>
 - <http://www.foreignpolicyi.org/content/president-seems-understand-we-have-win-libya-says-fpi-director-william-kristol>
 - http://politicalwire.com/archives/2011/03/29/benghazi_and_charlotte.html

You Tube

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_MK90N2JG8

This article speaks about the current DNC Chair, Tim Kaine. Tim Kaine is supposed to be a superdelegate for the DNC because he is the chairperson; however, he has decided that he may run for the Senate, thus giving up his vote and leaving the DNC Chair position open.

- <http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/14/dnc-chair-likely-to-run-for-senate/?ref=allsearch>

In the link I have inserted, Obama speaks about why he chose Charlotte for the 2012 DNC as well as projections he has made for the DNC. It includes a seven minute clip of his opinions on Charlotte as well as an article that highlights key points. It's just additional information about the DNC.

- <http://www.wsocvtv.com/news/27267678/detail.html>

Recently, the 2012 DNC has released an ad targeting the Latino community. It is the first advertisement released by the DNC:

- <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/jul/22/dncs-debut-tv-ad-2012-spanish/>
- <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0711/59637.html>

Interview with Steve Kerrigan, the CEO of the 2012 DNC. It's his most current interview so it may be interesting to read:

- http://charlotte.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/a_conversation_with_2012_dnc_ceo_steve_kerrigan/Content?oid=1351481

This particular link is from the ABC news website and it contains a video interview with President Obama about his “volunteer army” during the 2012 DNC. It may be interesting to look view because we were talking about volunteers helping VLN:

- <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/president-obama-dnc-mobilize-2012-campaign-volunteer-army/story?id=13768547>

Democratic Party Profile & Demographics Summary: *(See demographics section for more details)*

- Professionals, those who have a college education and whose work revolves around the conceptualization of ideas, have supported the Democratic Party by a slight majority since 2000.
- Academics, intellectuals, and the highly educated overall constitute an important part of the Democratic voter base.
- Studies have shown that younger voters (18-24) tend to vote mostly for Democratic candidates in recent years.
- Today, roughly a third of the American public is estimated to be working class with around 52% being either members of the working or lower classes. Together socially conservative and the financially disadvantaged comprised roughly 54% of the Democratic base.
- Recent polls have indicated that 41% of women identify as Democrats while only 25% of women identify as Republicans and 26% as independents. Among ethnic minorities, women also are more likely to identify as Democrats.
- Americans living with a domestic partner, are single, are separated but not divorced, or are divorced are more likely than others to vote Democratic.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans typically vote Democratic in national elections within the 70-77% range, according to national media exit polling. In heavily gay precincts in large cities across the nation, the average was higher, ranging from 85-94%.
- Among the African American community, they consistently vote between 85-95% Democratic. In addition, recent Caribbean and African immigrants have voted solidly Democratic.
- Democrats increased their share of the Hispanic vote in the 2008 presidential election, with Barack Obama receiving 67%.
- In June 2007 that 39% of Arab Americans identify as Democrats, 26% as Republicans, and 28% as independents.
- Finally, growing religious diversity favors Democrats as well, especially rapid increases among the unaffiliated (75 percent of whom voted for Obama). Unaffiliated or secular voters—not white evangelical Protestants—are the fastest-growing “religious” group in the United States.

The “People” of the Democratic Party:

Groups listed on the Democratic Party’s website under the “People” Tab, signifying who they represent

- African Americans
- Americans with Disabilities
- Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders
- Democrats Abroad
- Ethnic Council
- Faith
- Hispanics
- LGBT Community
- Native Americans
- Rural Americans
- Seniors & Retirees
- Small Business Community
- Union Members & Families
- Veterans & Military Families
- Women
- Young People & Students

These are the people that we should expect at the convention. Recommendation: Develop ways to market to these groups as well, especially since a lot of Democratic representatives are minorities, women, and members of the LGBT community.

The Democratic Party’s Key Interests & Platform Issues:

Use this information to determine what type of protestors we will have as well. We may want to find a way to appeal to these groups as well as they will be attending the DNC, especially since there is a peace rally that will be held during the convention so they can voice their opinions.

- Civil Rights
- Economy & Job Creation
- Education
- Energy Independence
- Environment
- Fair Elections
- Health Care
- Immigration Reform
- National Security
- Open Government
- Science & Technology
- Retirement Security
- Voting Rights

Important Groups in the Democratic Party:

- The Democratic National Committee (DNC) is responsible for promoting Democratic campaign activities. While the DNC is responsible for overseeing the process of writing the Democratic Platform, the DNC is more focused on campaign and organizational strategy than public policy. In presidential elections, it supervises the Democratic National Convention.
- The DNC is currently chaired by Florida congresswomen Debbie Wasserman Schultz.
- The **Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee** (DCCC) assists party candidates’ in House races; its current chairman (selected by the party caucus) is Rep. Steve Israel of New York. Similarly, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), currently headed by Senator Patty Murray of Washington, raises large sums for Senate races.
- The **Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee** (DLCC), currently chaired by Mike Gronstal of Iowa, is a smaller organization with much less funding that focuses on state legislative races.
- The DNC sponsors the **College Democrats of America** (CDA), a student-outreach organization with the goal of training and engaging a new generation of Democratic activists.

- **Democrats Abroad** is the organization for Americans living outside the United States; they work to advance the goals of the party and encourage Americans living abroad to support the Democrats.
- The **Young Democrats of America (YDA)** is a youth-led organization that attempts to draw in and mobilize young people for Democratic candidates, but operates outside of the DNC. In addition, the recently created branch of the Young Democrats, the **Young Democrats High School Caucus**, attempts to raise awareness and activism amongst teenagers to not only vote and volunteer, but participate in the future as well.
- The **Democratic Governors Association (DGA)**, chaired by Governor Martin O'Malley of Maryland, is an organization supporting the candidacies of Democratic gubernatorial nominees and incumbents.

Democratic Party Demographics:

Professionals, those who have a college education and whose work revolves around the conceptualization of ideas, have supported the Democratic Party by a slight majority since 2000. Between 1988 and 2000, professionals favored Democrats by a 12-percentage point margin. While the professional class was once a stronghold of the Republican Party, it has become increasingly split between the two parties, leaning in favor of the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party also has strong support among scientists, with 55% identifying as Democrats, 32% as Independents, and 6% as Republicans and 52% identifying as liberal, 35% as moderate, and 9% as conservative. Professionals are now the most Democratic and fastest-growing occupational group in the United States, and they are a huge chunk of the burgeoning white college graduate population. They gave Obama an estimated 68 percent of their vote in 2008.

Academics, intellectuals, and the highly educated overall constitute an important part of the Democratic voter base. Academia in particular tends to be progressive. In a 2005 survey, nearly 72% of full-time faculty members identified as liberal, while 15% identified as conservative. The social sciences and humanities were the most liberal disciplines while business was the most conservative. Male professors at more advanced stages of their careers as well as those at elite institutions tend to be the most liberal.

Studies have shown that younger voters tend to vote mostly for Democratic candidates in recent years. The young have voted in favor of the Democratic presidential candidate in every election since Bill Clinton in 1992, and are more likely to identify as liberals than the general population. In the 2006 midterm elections, the Democrats received 60% of the vote from the same age group. Polls suggest that younger voters tend to be more liberal than the general population and have more liberal views than the public on same-sex marriage and universal healthcare, helping Barack Obama carry 66% of their votes in 2008.

Today, roughly a third of the American public is estimated to be working class with around 52% being either members of the working or lower classes. Most working class Democrats differs from most liberals,

however, in their more socially conservative views. Working class Democrats tend to be more religious and likely to belong to an ethnic minority. Socially conservative and disadvantaged Democrats are among the least educated and lowest earning ideological demographics. In 2005, only 15% had a college degree, compared to 27% at the national average and 49% of liberals, respectively. Together socially conservative and the financially disadvantaged comprised roughly 54% of the Democratic base.

Although the "gender gap" has varied over many years, women of all ages are more likely than men to identify as Democrats. Recent polls have indicated that 41% of women identify as Democrats while only 25% of women identify as Republicans and 26% as independents. Among ethnic minorities, women also are more likely to identify as Democrats.

Americans living with a domestic partner, are single, are separated but not divorced, or are divorced are more likely than others to vote Democratic.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans typically vote Democratic in national elections within the 70-77% range, according to national media exit polling. In heavily gay precincts in large cities across the nation, the average was higher, ranging from 85-94%. In 2008 Barack Obama won 70% to John McCain's 27% with 3% to others. About three-fourths vote Democratic and one-fourth Republican from year to year."

Among the African American community, they consistently vote between 85-95% Democratic. In addition, recent Caribbean and African immigrants have voted solidly Democratic.

Democrats increased their share of the Hispanic vote in the 2008 presidential election, with Barack Obama receiving 67%. Cuban Americans still heavily vote Republican (although some younger Cuban-Americans have begun voting Democratic) but Mexican Americans, Puerto Rican Americans, Dominican Americans, and Central American and South American immigrants have all voted dependably for Democrats.

In June 2007 that 39% of Arab Americans identify as Democrats, 26% as Republicans, and 28% as independents.

Heavily Democratic minority voters (80 percent for Obama) increased their share of votes in U.S. presidential elections by 11 percentage points between 1988 and 2008, while the share of increasingly Democratic white college graduate voters rose 4 points. But the share of white working-class (not college-educated) voters, who have remained conservative in their orientation, has plummeted by 15 points.

Other demographic trends accentuate Democrats' advantage. The Millennial generation (those born between 1978 and 2000) is adding 4 million eligible voters to the voting pool every year, and this group

voted for Obama by a stunning 66-32 margin in 2008.

Democrats also generally do better among women than men, and they do particularly well among growing female subgroups such as the unmarried and the college educated. Seventy percent of unmarried women voted for Obama, and an estimated 65 percent of college-educated women supported him. Unmarried women are now 47 percent, or almost half, of adult women, up from 38 percent in 1970, and college-educated women are an especially rapidly growing population. Their numbers have more than tripled in recent decades, from just 8 percent of the 25-and-older female population in 1970 to 28 percent today.

Finally, growing religious diversity favors Democrats as well, especially rapid increases among the unaffiliated (75 percent of who voted for Obama). Unaffiliated or secular voters—not white evangelical Protestants—are the fastest-growing “religious” group in the United States.

DNC 2012: Delegate Updates

Based on the Rules and Bylaws Committee of the DNC, all states must submit their delegate selection plans by May 2, 2011. This will include dates for states’ caucuses, primaries, and state convention dates in which the DNC delegates will be finalized, as well as the number of delegates (pledged and unpledged) that will represent that specific state. However, we may not be able to see some of the information before August 2011.

Delegate election dates for some states are listed below:

- Iowa: February 6, 2012
- New Hampshire: February 14, 2012
- Nevada: February 18, 2012
- South Carolina: February 28, 2012
- Super Tuesday will be March 6, 2012. No other states may hold elections prior to this date. The states listed above are the first four states to hold elections before any other state can. This means we will know the delegates from these four states after the elections on these dates. On Super Tuesday, most states hold their elections so we can begin a more in-depth analysis of the delegates.
- January 5, 2011, the 112th Congress became active. Democrats who currently serve may be present at the DNC.

Aside from the pledged and unpledged delegates selected for the DNC during the primaries and state conventions, there will also be super-delegates in attendance. These delegates are selected based on current or past positions held.