



Seth Sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com>

Re: Biafore Response and Internal Issues.

1 message

Mary Claytor <maryannclaytor@gmail.com>

Sun, Jul 11, 2021 at 4:41 AM

To: Hollis Lewis <hollistlewis@gmail.com>

Cc: Selina Vickers <selina.vickers.wv@gmail.com>, Kim Felix <kfelix@vt.edu>, Mary Thorp <thorpdesign@gmail.com>, Marlene Midget <mmidget215@gmail.com>, rosemary ketchum <Rosemaryforwv@gmail.com>, Cody Thompson <codythompson2010@gmail.com>, Affirmative Action Committee <affirmative.action.wv@gmail.com>, Aryanna Islam <aryannaislam@outlook.com>, Jarryd Powell <jarrydpowellwv@gmail.com>, rusty williams <rustywilliams00@gmail.com>, Kelly Elkins <kelly.j.elkins@gmail.com>, Bob Baker <bobbaker64@aol.com>, Marilyn Monahan <MonahanCan@gmail.com>, seth sturm <sethsturm@gmail.com>

Since I agree with what Kim Felix wrote in her email, I will not address her stated issues. I agree with you, Hollis, that I don't want our concentration to be entirely on Belinda. However, it is short-sighted to limit discussions in the future regarding her. There is no way to know what future actions may be necessary to protect the committee's integrity and hold her accountable. If the group decides that actions are needed, are you willing to act as co-chair and communicate those actions in the future? If you feel this is something you are unwilling to do, we all would understand if you want to step down from your role as co-chair of the AA Committee.

Regarding helping candidates, we must use caution in supporting candidates before knowing whether they will have a primary opponent. Therefore, I would advise not to support any candidate until their filing deadlines have passed for their respective races. However, this doesn't imply that individual caucuses should not assist in candidate recruitment to encourage the participation of underrepresented groups. Still, I wouldn't recommend we take on that task as part of our duties as the Affirmative Action Committee.

In future correspondence, you may not want to use condescending language when also complaining about what you feel was condescending language. The statements that I used in the chat would more appropriately be considered constructive criticism.

Lastly, as a gentle reminder, as co-chair, you and Mary are not the decision-makers for the committee. You were elected to represent the will of the committee in matters that we as a group determine. Each member should be allowed to research, dissect, and interpret all information regarding the committee as soon as feasibly possible. It is understandable that after the committee determines courses of action, you and Mary communicate and plan how you will deliver those courses of action. It's condescending to the intelligence of our members to think otherwise.

I look forward to our all working together to achieve the objective of ensuring our underrepresented communities are included and respected by the West Virginia Democratic Party. These statements are my own and not those of any other member of the committee. However, I hope a discussion of my suggestions will occur at a future meeting for clarity purposes to allow us to all be on the same page.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Claytor
Co-Chair of the Black Caucus

On Fri, Jul 9, 2021 at 11:18 AM Hollis Lewis <hollistlewis@gmail.com> wrote:

I want to clear up any confusion with Biafore responses not being shared with the AAC. This was in no way to hide or keep the AAC in the dark. There was communication between myself and Mary Thorp in which we wanted to have a better understanding of the bylaws Biafore referred to in her responses before we forwarded anything. I have text messages to verify this. I apologize if we did not do things promptly. As leaders, we should be allotted some discretion while also adhering to our commitment to sharing information freely and openly with the committee.

There has been no instance in which I have personally done anything to purposefully mislead, manipulate, or leave this committee/caucus in the dark. I am not perfect, and as mentioned above, I need to improve on disseminating information quickly. However, I will not tolerate any ad hominem attack, condescending, or belittle language. In addition, I do not appreciate any deflection of past issues with Biafore on to me; I am not her! In my estimation, our message has been lost in bickering and the consisting fighting with Biafore. While I believe the Executive Committee (EC) needs new leadership, I do not think that Biafore nor the EC is a total impediment to this committee to doing good work. With that, I will no longer participate in discussions concerning Biafore outside of a succession plan or identifying a candidate to run against her in the election. I will focus my energy on AA plan, community outreach, voter registration/education, assisting candidates whose values are aligned with this committee. The best way to show our collective strength is to help Democratic candidates get elected to office. I have identified a few candidates who have elections coming within the next four years or so who I believe we should get behind including, Mayor Amy Goodwin, Mayor Beverly White, Mayor Dan Dudley, and many more. Please email any candidate who you feel shares our values, and we should try to reach out to.

Sincerely,

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