

November 15, 2021

To: Members of the West Virginia Democratic Party's Executive Committee and Whom It May Concern,

This letter serves as a witness statement in reference to my experience as a member of the Affirmative Action Committee (AAC), a subcommittee of the West Virginia Democratic Party (WVDP).

My name is Kim Felix and I serve as the co-chair of the Latine (pronounced latin-aye)/Hispanic Caucus along with male representative Charlie Mullins. The statements in this letter are comprised of my individual experience in working with Selina Vickers (Vickers), secretary of the AAC, and Mary Thorp (Thorp) who is now the former co-chair of the AAC and former co-chair of the Senior Caucus.

I was initially recruited to serve on the AAC by Vickers in June of 2021. She communicated that working with the AAC would mean the minority voting block in West Virginia would have greater representation in the WVDP's Executive Committee (EC). I was excited to be participating in the democratic party in a meaningful way.

Within weeks, I and others on the AAC, found that we were lured to participate on the AAC under false pretenses. A number of incidents occurred that unequivocally revealed that Vickers and Thorp used their positions of leadership, influence, and the minority members of the AAC to further personal agendas. Vickers expressed relatively quickly that her primary objective included targeting the WVDP's chairwoman, Belinda Biafore, as well as removing members of the WVDP's EC in an effort to replace them with personal friends, members of Vickers's progressive group entitled *The Reformers*, and people Vickers deemed as "trustworthy". As their agenda became ever more apparent, many members began to protest Vickers and Thorp's actions and others have resigned. Those actions include ongoing and insidious manipulation of the AAC, its minority members, and the creation of an affirmative action plan and bylaws for the expressed purpose of silencing dissenting voices.

There are several email communiques from Mary Ann Claytor, Charlie Mullins, Mari Sturm, Seth Sturm, other members of the AAC, and me imploring Vickers to reposition her focus from chairwoman Biafore and pivot her energy towards working on creating an affirmative action plan as we all believed that was what we were called to do on the AAC. The irony of this situation is that Vickers and Thorp submitted an affirmative action plan to the WVDP's EC written by majority white members of the AAC. There was little to no input from the minority constituents of the AAC. The plan that was submitted is a false demonstration of what should have been a community written affirmative action plan and contains plagiarized content submitted without the knowledge or consent of the AAC's minority members. Paradoxically, this is the same infraction Vickers waged an entire campaign against chairwoman Biafore subsequently calling for the chairwoman's resignation.

Both Vickers and Thorp proceeded to institute a number of rules that resulted in limiting the diversity of minority members and the inclusion of minority voices in both the creation of the bylaws and the affirmative action plan. Both Vickers and Thorp have deprived BIPOC members the opportunity to fully participate and instead, have abused their leadership positions by:

1. Removing BIPOC members of the AAC from subcommittees such as planning, bylaws, etc.
2. Using BIPOC and minority members to effectuate an anti-democratic agenda
3. Writing scripts for white members used during AAC meetings in an effort to gain and whip majority votes on actions meant to silence dissenting BIPOC members and their concerns
4. Appropriating email communications in the name of white co-chair(s) on the AAC
5. Filing grievances on behalf of BIPOC members without expressed authorization
6. Lying to AAC members about the purpose, scope, and mission of the AAC
7. Signing contracts with 3rd party vendors without consent from members of the AAC or the WVDP
8. Holding a listening tour with WV voters in the name of the AAC without authorization
9. Using the WV voting database(s) to target dissenting minorities
10. Gathering private WV voter information to intimidate, harass, or otherwise use data in inappropriate and unauthorized ways
11. Inviting non-WVians to participate in AAC meetings while not allowing AAC members to participate or vote
12. Actively blocking votes of minority AAC members while allowing white AAC members to participate in voting during AAC meetings
13. Enforcing rules, policies, and procedures that goes beyond the scope and authority of the secretary
14. Exclusively disenfranchising BIPOC members of the AAC for the express purpose of limiting their participation
15. Targeting BIPOC members in an effort to exclude diversity

To say that my experience with the AAC has been eye opening is an understatement. The disingenuous and virulent leadership of Vickers and Thorp weakens the public's confidence in the WVDP. It is my sincere hope that the EC will take the egregiousness of Vickers and Thorp's actions under serious consideration and return a decision commensurate with the urgency and swift decisiveness it deserves. It is

worth noting that what started out as a committee of 18 individuals is now comprised of 9. Exactly 50% of the committee have submitted letters of resignation citing the unbearable toxic leadership and the need to preserve their mental health as well as their desire to rid themselves of actions that further marginalized minorities. I could not attest to a more fitting reason to remove Vickers from the AAC and to issue public condemnation of Vickers and Thorp's pernicious and malignant leadership.

I thank the members of the EC for their time, consideration, and for hearing this grievance.

Best regards,

Kim Félix

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