



October 28, 2008

Mr. Michael Cryor
Chairman, Maryland Democratic Party
188 Main Street, Suite 1
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Cryor:

Last night, I was pleased to attend the Maryland Democratic Party's annual gala dinner at the Baltimore Hilton. I was proud to join hundreds of Party activists who are working hard to take our country back and elect Barack Obama the next President of United States of America.

However, I was troubled to see just how far the leadership of the Maryland Democratic Party has become indebted to the national gambling industry. Not only were gambling interests major sponsors of this event, but the leadership of our state Party made a conscious decision to silence those who are not beholden to these special interests. While other statewide elected officials were invited to speak at last night's event, I was intentionally left off the program because some feared I would address a major issue on the ballot this November: whether to amend Maryland's constitution and legalize slots. This was petty and below the dignity of the Maryland Democratic Party.

When did Maryland's political bosses allow our Party – the Party of Roosevelt, Kennedy and Obama – to be taken over by the national gambling industry? Apparently this happened when a few political bosses decided to pay off some campaign contributors and well-connected lobbyists with a plan to sell taxpayers down the river and amend Maryland's constitution with slots. Apparently it happened when a few political bosses decided that addicting 100,000 new Marylanders to gambling was good public policy. Apparently it happened when a few political bosses decided that sticking taxpayers with more than 600 million dollars in new social costs was good for an economy already in a recession – just like they stuck taxpayers with the largest tax increase in State history. Apparently it happened when a few political bosses decided that it was okay to impose a regressive tax on the working poor in order to avoid doing the hard work of actually governing.

I'm proud to be a Democrat. I'm proud of our Party's long, progressive tradition – the New Deal, the Great Society, the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and so many other achievements. I am proud that our Party nominated the first African American for President – and I'm proud that it will be the Democratic Party that produces the first African American President in our nation's history. And I am especially proud to have been an early and strong supporter of Barack Obama – at a time when some didn't believe in hope and couldn't comprehend the true meaning of change.

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However, I am concerned that a few political bosses are allowing the Maryland Democratic Party to be hijacked by the national gambling industry, silencing those who believe that our progressive values are at odds with an industry that preys upon the poor and the vulnerable, all in the name of excessive greed. And I am struck by just how out of touch these political bosses really are.

The Presidential nominee we celebrated at last night's event has not only rejected the kind of special interest money the Democratic party bosses have openly accepted, but he has been a staunch opponent of gambling. And last night's guest of honor – Virginia Governor Tim Kaine – is himself an opponent of gambling. So while we were honoring Senator Obama and celebrating with Governor Kaine – two people who oppose gambling and represent the future of the Democratic Party in America – Maryland Democratic Party leaders were accepting special interest gambling money and practicing the politics of the past.

We are poised for an historic victory one week from today – a victory that will bring about much-needed change in America. Let's hope Maryland's Democratic Party bosses get that message of change.

Sincerely,

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

Peter Franchot
Comptroller