



September 16, 2009

Michael Kiernan
 Chair, Iowa Democratic Party
 5661 Fleur Drive
 Des Moines, IA 50321

Matt Strawn
 Chair, Iowa Republican Party
 621 E 9th Street
 Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Mr. Kiernan and Mr. Strawn:

A central premise of American politics is the enfranchisement of every citizen. The Jewish community has actively campaigned for fair and equal representation for the voices of majority and minorities alike, the protection of civil rights of all people and unencumbered access for all to the processes that choose our elected leaders. Our nation has thrived because of the tremendous opportunities afforded to people from diverse racial, ethnic, religious and other backgrounds. For this reason, we are distressed to learn that the Democratic and Republican parties of Iowa have decided to hold their 2010 caucuses on a Saturday.

The decision to move the Iowa political party caucuses to a Saturday effectively disenfranchises members of the Jewish community. Jews who observe the Sabbath could not work on caucus day to support their candidates of choice. Worse, since caucuses do not allow for absentee voting, there would be essentially no opportunity to participate in this important process. This is utterly inconsistent with the values of our pluralistic democracy.

Voting and participation in the electoral process is a cornerstone of any democracy. It is the highest civic duty most people ever undertake. Saturday caucuses will force members of the Iowa Jewish community to choose between their faith and their civic duties.

Given the important role Iowa has in our nation's electoral contests and their leadership position in serving as a role model to other states, we respectfully ask and hope the Democratic and Republican parties to reverse this ill-considered move.

Sincerely,

American Jewish Committee
 American Jewish Congress
 Anti-Defamation League
 B'nai B'rith International
 Central Conference of American Rabbis
 Hadassah: The Women's Zionist Organization of America
 ORT America
 Jewish Council for Public Affairs
 Jewish Labor Committee

Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
 Jewish War Veterans
 National Council of Jewish Women
 National Jewish Democratic Council
 Rabbinical Assembly
 Republican Jewish Coalition
 United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
 Union of Reform Judaism

cc: Democratic National Committee
 Republican National Committee