TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Statewide Officers of the California Democratic Party

DATE: November 14, 2019

RE: Response to Request for Removal

We have received and considered a request to revoke the status of Chris LaFarge as a Delegate to the Democratic State Central Committee (DSCC). We, hereby, deny the request for the following reasons.

Our Party has begun the process of confronting the issues of harassment, bullying, and retaliation in our Party. We have enacted an expanded Code of Conduct, appointed an Independent Ombudsperson, and enacted a robust system to appropriately address complaints. With these steps we have collectively sought to write a new chapter in our Party’s history – one in which every Democrat is treated with dignity and respect.

But, we are left to grapple with those incidents taking place prior to the implementation of our new system. This incident falls squarely into that category.

Here, the facts are unclear. Ms. Huerta provides one account. Mr. LaFarge provides another. Unfortunately, a thorough investigation was not completed to better understand the facts. We are left to square both the veracity of Ms. Huerta’s allegation and the due process rights afforded to Mr. LaFarge. Unfortunately, we simply cannot do so with the certainty required to revoke the status of Mr. LaFarge as a DSCC Delegate.

Future incidents of this nature would be dealt with in the following manner:

1. Every individual that seeks to engage with the Party will be required to acknowledge their adherence to the Code of Conduct.
2. An allegation of a violation of the Code of Conduct should be submitted to the Independent Ombudsperson by the complainant.
3. If the Independent Ombudsperson determines that an investigation is required, they will initiate said investigation by selecting an Independent Investigator from a list previously approved by the Executive Board.
4. The Independent Investigator will complete the investigation, write a report outlining the facts and determining whether the complaint is substantiated or not.
5. If the complaint is substantiated, the written report will be provided to the Conduct Commission which will review the report, determine the appropriate discipline, and provide that recommendation to the Statewide Officers for action.
6. The Statewide Officers will then review and recommendation and take appropriate action.
The activity alleged by Ms. Huerta will not be tolerated in our Party. Together, we must ensure that every single person who engages with our Party feels safe in the free expression in the advocacy of our Democratic values.

So, while we take no action against Mr. LaFarge, we hope that this incident will serve as a notice and warning to all that we take instances of harassment, bullying, and retaliation seriously and hope the full implementation of our new policy will provide the clarity needed to take decisive action in the future.