

# Clinton Supporter: We Can't Risk Four More Years of Bad Leadership!

*Michele Thomas, one of the top organizers for HRC 300 Delegates, a grassroots organization which has been fighting to compel the Democratic National Committee to put Hillary Clinton's name in nomination, and have a roll call vote at the Democratic Convention, was interviewed on Aug. 16, by host Harley Schlanger, on the LaRouche Show (www.larouchepub.com, Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Here is an edited transcript. Subheads have been added.*

**Harley Schlanger:** In ten days, the Democratic Party will open its convention in Denver, Colorado, and according to all the media and the pundits, Sen. Barack Obama is already the nominee, and the Convention would be a mere formality to serve as his coronation.

Well, a funny thing is happening on the way to Denver: After word got out that Democratic National Committee chair Howard "The Scream" Dean was not even going to allow Senator Clinton's name to be put into nomination, a group of her supporters escalated their mobilization to overturn the attempted coup. The purpose of the coup, was not only to defeat Senator Clinton in favor of Senator Obama, whose campaign had been backed from the beginning by speculator and financial predator George Soros, but to destroy forever the Franklin Roosevelt tradition in the party, of representing the interests of the lower 80% of family-income brackets, who are being badly hurt by this financial disintegration.

Supporters of Senator Clinton have taken her example of resolve and tenacity as a model, and refused to give up on the possibility that she could still win the nomination. After all, she won more votes in the primary than Obama did. Beginning with the Texas and Ohio primaries, she won 54% of the votes cast in the last primaries. She won most of the big states, including New York, New Jersey, and California, and the so-called "battleground states," including Ohio, Florida,

and Pennsylvania, that a Democrat has to win, to win the Presidency. Further, there's serious evidence that Obama's supporters won delegates in caucus states through fraud.

Last Thursday [Aug. 14], it was announced that Senator Clinton's name *will* be put into nomination in Denver, and while the lying media are trying to dismiss this as merely "symbolic," it means there's still a chance, that she could win the nomination.

Joining me on the program today, is someone who's played a major role in ensuring that this chance still exists. Michele Thomas has led a drive to collect signatures of delegates in accordance with DNC rules, to provide an assurance that the Dean cabal could not keep Senator Clinton's name from being placed in nomination at the convention. And we've just heard today, that there will be a full roll-call vote.

Michele, welcome to the program.

**Michele Thomas:** Thank you, Harley, for having me.

## A Real Grassroots Movement

**Schlanger:** Well, why don't you start by telling our listeners what you've been doing, and why you decided to do this?

**Thomas:** Okay. I'm working with a group called "HRC 300 Delegates," and it's a grassroots organization of Hillary Clinton delegates that has organized a petition, which is in accordance with the DNC rules, and it is the right of the delegates to do this, that if 300 delegates sign a petition to put Hillary Clinton's name into nomination, that the DNC cannot block it. They have to accept it.

Now, of course, Hillary Clinton would have had to sign that petition for it to move forward. But her delegates in this particular group that I am volunteering for, had organized this, and wanted to make sure, that if she *wanted* that option, that it would be available to her.

**Schlanger:** And when you started this, it looked as though they were not going to let her name be put into nomination, right?

**Thomas:** Yes, actually, what many Americans don't realize is, candidates' names are always put into nomination. And you know, since 1884, I believe, only four candidates didn't put their names into nomination—it's been nomination through acclamation—and that is what Barack Obama wanted to occur in this particular election, as well.

Now, people have to realize that Howard Dean's name went into nomination, and there was a floor vote [2004]; Ted Kennedy's name went into nomination, and there was a floor vote [1980]. The delegates are sent to the convention to represent the voters of their constituency. Now, you have different kinds of delegates: You have pledged delegates, which are voted in by our constituents; and then you have automatic delegates, which are the superdelegates, and then you have PLEO delegates, which are party leaders and elected officials. All these delegates go to conventions. They each count for one vote, and they go and vote for whatever candidates.

### They Wanted To Silence the Voters

**Schlanger:** So, if Dean would have kept Hillary Clinton's name from being put into nomination, does that mean that 1,600 to 1,700 delegates who were elected to vote for her, would have been denied that right to vote?

**Thomas:** Absolutely. And that was the whole point of these delegates' organizing: that, the 18 million voters who voted for Hillary, are represented by 1,670, or whatever the number is, delegates, pledged delegates, who are being sent to the Convention on their behalf. The voters are represented by these delegates! And the delegates go there, and cast their vote for Hillary, and represent the voters that voted for her.

So, the Democratic Party wanted to silence half of the delegation, and half of the voters of the entire pri-



hillaryclinton.com/Barbara Kinney

*Placing Hillary Clinton's name in nomination at the Democratic Convention is the objective of the HRC 300 Delegates. Michele Thomas, a leading organizer for the group, believes that Clinton deserves the nomination, on the grounds that she received a majority of the popular vote in the primaries.*

mary. They wanted to silence them.

**Schlanger:** And you didn't want that to happen.

**Thomas:** No. We felt that the process that has been put in place since 1884—they wanted to subvert the process for this particular election. And they did it, you know, somewhat with Michigan and Florida. We know what happened with the Rules and By-Laws Committee meeting [decision to seat half the delegates from Michigan and Florida—ed.], and then they wanted to do it, by not putting her name into nomination.

And so, some of the delegates started organizing, and they read in the DNC rules that they can do a petition. I'm a volunteer, I'm not a delegate—I volunteered to help spearhead that petition drive. And it's been a *completely* grassroots movement, meaning, that Hillary's campaign has had nothing to do with it. We have had no contact with them, whatsoever. It would have been nice, if we would have had contact with them, because we could have gotten all the delegates' contact information. We had *no* contact information for any delegates. We had to find out who they were, and liter-

ally Google their names, and see if we could find their phone numbers. And we found about 80% of those phone numbers. And then, I had to contact delegates in states, to inform them that Howard Dean was trying to subvert the process, and not allow the roll call vote to happen. Many of her delegates did not even know that!

And so, that was a big part of it, as well, like to basically inform them. And then, inform them about the petition.

And so, basically that is what I've been doing: Is spearheading that petition.

## A Political Epiphany

**Schlanger:** You were not necessarily political before you got involved in this. That is, you had a point of view, but you'd never done anything like this before. Why did you decide to do this?

**Thomas:** Well, it's true. This is the first election that I've ever become active in. And I know what happened in 2000, and I remember being very angry about what happened in Florida, and the unjust events that occurred, the Supreme Court ruling to put George Bush into the Presidency without counting all the votes in Florida. And then, I was also angry about the fact that John Kerry didn't win. And I realized, after that election, that I actually never did anything to *help* him win! I had never knocked on doors, I never made any phone calls, I didn't donate any money, or anything like that. So, this particular election, I decided that I would try to be a little more active, which I was.

I became active in about January. I started watching the whole process unfold, and initially got a gut reaction that there was something wrong with this election. And that was actually back in January. Especially when I was watching all the debates, and I was watching the pile-up on Hillary Clinton, from not only the moderators, but her fellow-candidates, who were just piling up on her in the debates. And then, I also noticed it, in the media, the media bias, and especially when I would go to any website, like *Washington Post* or CNN or the *New York Times*, I couldn't find links on her, and they were covered with links on Obama. In fact, I started *counting* them: It could be 15 links of Obama, maybe 2 of her. And you would look at the adjectives describing Obama, and they were always positive, and you would look at the adjectives describing her, and they were always negative. And so, I *knew* there was something wrong with this election.

And so, I started researching, and finally got into a couple blogs. I'd never been in a blog before, and I started learning more from other activists, who had the same sort of gut reactions that I did. So that's basically how I got involved.

I did volunteer in Pennsylvania for her, and met a lot of great activists as well, and then just became more involved from there.

**Schlanger:** Did you find that there were a lot of people who had a similar evolution? That they started out interested in the campaign, and they knew something was wrong, and they actually moved to the point of becoming part of changing the problem?

**Thomas:** Absolutely! It was *amazing*, how many people had the *exact* same experience as I did! I mean, I'm talking, the exact, same *moment* of experience: Like this moment, changed my life. When he did this, or they did this, I *knew* there was something wrong. I've had that conversation with hundreds and hundreds of people! At the same, exact moment, that we knew something was *really wrong* with this election.

For example, the not seating of Michigan and Florida; the not dealing with Michigan and Florida, for the *entire* primary, in which Hillary Clinton won those states, very big, that they were big states; there are 1.7 million people that voted. If she would have had those votes in her tally, those delegates in her tally, she would not have been behind; or if she was behind, not by very much. There wouldn't have been this drumbeat to get her out—I mean, they were trying to get her out after Iowa! And it was unbelievable!

## It Was the Economy

**Schlanger:** Michele, I've gotten to know you a little bit, and one of the aspects of what, I think, convinced you that you had to play a role, is what you see with the economy. I think this is why you have a sense that Senator Clinton should be the nominee. But go back to what you were saying about watching the debates, and your reaction on this question of the economy.

**Thomas:** I watched every single debate. I wanted to know, who was going to help our economy.

Now, I invest in the stock market, and have for a long time. And I was seeing the trends, and I could tell that our economy was suffering! It was going in a bad direction, and there were no signs that it was going to be corrected.



And so, I started watching the debates; I was very open: I mean, I didn't have a candidate whatsoever, and I was actually interested in Obama, because I had seen his speech at the 2004 Convention, I thought it was incredibly inspiring. I was actually a little surprised that he decided to run so quickly, after only being in the Senate for a year and a half, but I was interested in him. And I wasn't necessarily for Hillary, but I wasn't against her. I knew that some people were already against her, without giving her an open mind to actually watch what she had to say. So I was just very open to all the candidates.

I started watching all the debates. I watched Obama, and I didn't feel that he had the experience, and was qualified, based on what he was saying about the economy, or his policies, or his plans, or health-care plan, or what-have-you—he didn't seem well versed on any of the issues. And whenever Hillary Clinton would talk about what she was going to do, she had very clear, concise policies: She could describe very specifically what she was going to do. And I could understand what she was saying.

And so, I also went to all of the candidates' websites, and read all of their plans on how they were going to help the economy. And I believe that Hillary Clinton had the best plan. And this is before I got involved in January, and started seeing what I felt was wrong. I determined that Hillary was my candidate, I would say, back in November: "She's just *it*!" After watching all the debates, her policies, to me, were the *best*. And I mean that for the lower 80% of the population.

And, you know, we need to get back to having policies that serve them, because right now, the policies only serve maybe the top 1%, and in the past eight years, there's been a massive shift of wealth from the lower 80% to the top 1%. And so, that is a problem!

Because, when the middle class falls into poverty, the American Dream is over. And we all know, that when we all do better, the economy does better. And I can tell you for a fact, I did a lot better when Bill Clinton was President. And I think everyone did better.

## Mobilizing the Delegates

**Schlanger:** As you've been doing this work, and you started calling the delegates, and as you said, some



*Thomas said she became active, when she "got a gut reaction that there was something wrong with this election." She watched the debates, and began to notice the "pile-on" on Clinton, and the bias in the media. Shown, John Edwards, Hillary Clinton, and Barack Obama, in one of the debates on YouTube.*

of them were not aware that she was not being put into nomination, did you find that people were somewhat demoralized after the June 7 or June 8 announcement, by Senator Clinton, that she was suspending her campaign?

**Thomas:** Yes, there were variations of feelings about it, within the delegates. You had the people that were very informed about what happened, and were deeply disappointed in what happened. They're more the activists that came on board pretty quickly. Then you had some delegates that were less informed about what happened, and they are also the sort of people that toed the party line more. And when she said, she's suspended her campaign and got behind Obama, some of those people just said, "We just need to get behind Obama, because we can't have disunity in the party, and we just need to do what Hillary says." And others had a lot of fear, because they have positions, maybe in the party, or from the party, that they felt like if they participated in the petition, that they would jeopardize their job.

**Schlanger:** What do you tell a delegate, who says they have to, for the sake of the party, or party unity, go along with this? How do you organize them to change their thinking?

**Thomas:** Well, we weren't able to change everyone's thinking, but my pitch to them, was that it's not normal for a candidate's name not to be put into nomination. That's one of the first points I would make. The other point I would make is, that you are a delegate, that is a Clinton delegate, and it's a high honor to be a delegate, and you should take that very, very, very seriously. And that you're the voice of 18 million people—that's *half* that party! And half of the party cannot be silenced! It just can't!

And so, I believe that we need to uphold the democratic process at the highest level, and the way to do that, is to follow a process that has been in place since 1884. And that is what we're doing with this petition. It's going to be an historical document, because I don't believe that any delegates have ever had to *do* a petition, even though it may have been in the rules—*ever*—to get a candidate's name put into nomination.

And we were asking the delegates to come forward, and maybe be courageous enough to stand for what we believe is defending not only our Constitutional right, *but* the democratic process! The integrity of it!

So that was our pitch. Now, many of her delegates, I don't know the percentage—I would say 20 or 30%—have moved on to Obama. And they just feel like, there's going to be disunity, and we're going to create too much chaos at the Convention, and so forth. And what we say to them, is: We believe that the only way to unify the party is to allow everyone to vote! Is to allow all the delegates to go in there, and do their job. And let them vote for who they were sent for. And then, the nominee is determined, officially, and then everyone can move on, and maybe get behind that nominee in November. I mean, that's up to the delegates—I can't tell the delegates what to do. It's up to *every* American to decide what they're going to do in November.

But we believe the only way to *unify* the party, is not to *silence* half of the delegation, strongarm the delegation, but actually allow them to be part of the process, allow them to vote, and scream and yell if they want Hillary Clinton, or do whatever they do at conventions that normally takes place. And then, simply go on from the Convention, and maybe be less resentful because they weren't blocked from voting or so

forth, and allow the process to play out.

## **Obama: Limping to the Nomination**

**Schlanger:** I would say, it actually shows a weakness in the candidate, if you have to silence the opposition. Here you have someone, really limping into the nomination, and really only securing the nomination through this kind of intimidation and thuggery, from people like Dean. Have you run into some of this, from state chairmen, and other people trying to tell people not to sign the petition?

**Thomas:** Oh, absolutely! I mean, there has been a systematic isolation, and the state party chairs and the *head* of the state party chairs, who's a guy named Mark Brewer, who is President of the Association of State Party Chairs—there has been a systematic isolation of her delegates, from the Obama campaign. The Obama campaign has taken over the DNC. The DNC has moved to Chicago, and therefore, all the state party chairs have become the Obama campaign. And so we've actually contacted these state party chairs, saying, "Will you support us, with this petition? Will you give us the Hillary delegates' contact information? Because we want to inform them about what's going on, maybe talk to them." None of these people got back to us. We called Mark Brewer's office several times, e-mailed him several times, asking him, if he would actually support the petition. And being that it's in the DNC rules, and it's a right of the delegates! We're not doing anything wrong. Well, Mark Brewer never got back to us either.

Then, Governor Rendell [Pennsylvania] actually e-mailed out to all his delegates to *not* sign the petition, and we had some trouble getting delegates to sign the petition in Pennsylvania, because they were nervous about it—you know, they were warned by their governor. Now, that really shocked me! Because Pennsylvania went *big* for Hillary! I mean, I am talking *big* for Hillary.

**Schlanger:** Right!

**Thomas:** And Governor Rendell was a really big supporter of hers. Then, in Indiana, the state party chair informed all their delegates *not* to sign the petition, because they did not want to jeopardize Evan Bayh's chances in becoming Vice President, if some of the Indiana delegates signed the petition. So we had a lot of trouble in Indiana as well.

We had strong support in California, Texas, New

On Saturday, June 7, 2008, Hillary Clinton suspended her historic campaign for President. To her 18 million voters, it may have seemed like an end, but I **pledge to make it a beginning**... a beginning of a movement to achieve the democratic and just country that Hillary has envisioned for America.

I stand together with Hillary Clinton's 18 million voters to demand that Senator Obama and the Democratic Party:

- Bring us together by seating 100% of the Florida and Michigan delegations in Denver with 100% of their votes, allocated in accordance with the popular vote of each state.
- Bring us together by adopting policies on the Platform Committee that Hillary Clinton has championed.
- Bring us together through reform of the primary and caucus system to reflect the basic principle of one person one vote.
- Bring us together through outspoken denunciation of all gender bias, racism and other forms of discrimination.
- Bring us together by fairly and respectfully including Hillary and her supporters at the Democratic National Convention in Denver by, among other things, placing her name in nomination for President, conducting a roll call vote, and providing her a prominent speaking role during prime time on August 26th, the 50th anniversary of women's suffrage.

**SIGN THE PLEDGE**

We will present the pledges to Senator Obama, the DNC, and Senator McCain. Your voice will be heard.

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

State:  AA

iownmyvote.com

*Groups like Thomas's have been circulating this Internet petition among delegates, calling for Clinton to be nominated, and for a roll call vote to be taken at the Convention. They have already secured some 400 delegate signature; 300 are needed for nomination.*

York, Massachusetts, West Virginia. Kentucky—I know there's a lot of strongarming going on right there, even though she won that state by 36%. Of course, we had incredibly strong support in Arkansas. We've had delegates sign it, pretty much in every single state. Washington's a really strong delegation up there; Oregon, she's got some *really* strong Clinton delegates, that are a major part of organizing this petition; Arizona, we have really great delegates there, and Colorado. And then the other ones, we're just trying to inform. But, I would say, the delegates that organized this thing, came from Texas, they came from Washington, and Oregon, and Colorado; those are the people who came forward first, to push this thing.

## When Dean and Obama Blink

**Schlanger:** Michele, what was your reaction on Thursday, when you heard that Dean and Obama blinked, and said, "Okay, she can put her name in nomination," and then today the announcement that there will be a roll-call vote?

**Thomas:** Well, it was, "Wow! We did it!" One, because, I do believe the petition had a lot to do with the pressure that was put on the Obama campaign and the

DNC, because we issued a press release that went national and international. And it was all that was talked about for about ten days, and the DNC was getting numerous phone calls about it. The Obama campaign was, and Hillary's campaign—there was a lot of chatter, there was a lot of pressure. And they knew we were going to reach our 300 number of petitions signed. And so, it felt great, like we had an accomplishment in that.

It was also a big example to me, that, a few people, who believe in something strongly, can actually do something. And I will never forget that, for one.

The other reaction I had to it, was to Obama's statement that, "of course" he was going to put her name into nomination, and he would *graciously* do this, to *allow* her supporters to vote! That made me not so happy, because I know for a fact, that his campaign and the DNC has been systematically trying to isolate

us, block us, ridicule us, isolate the Clinton delegates from even communicating with each other. And I know that has been the experience of all my delegates across the states.

**Schlanger:** I also know that you're not going to stop till you get the signatures. What can the listeners of this program do, to give you some backup?

**Thomas:** Okay, Phase I, was to get the floor nomination. We have that now. Phase II, is delegate retention. We believe—I don't know the percentage, I really don't—because it's not like we've been able to contact all of her delegates, because, again, we don't have the contact information; we've just gone off the major grassroots campaign. I'm assuming we've maybe lost 20 or 30% of the delegates. We want 'em back! And we want the constituents across the states to find out who their delegates are, that are representing Clinton in their area, and see if you can contact them, and let them know, that you hope that they'd go to Denver and represent your voice.

And what we want to do, is to persuade these delegates, that to not do what the constituents sent you to do, is a violation. And we want you to take your responsibility very, very, very seriously. Because I'm not



a delegate, but God! I wish I was! Because I would find it a high honor to represent those voters, I would take it very, very seriously. And we want these delegates back in our zone. We want them to go to the floor and vote for Hillary, when they have the opportunity.

And that, to me, that's what your listeners can do: If you know your delegates in your area, and you can go to the DNC website, and there is a list of the delegates, you can look up "certified delegate list for the DNC"—you can Google that. And you can download your state, and you can find out who your delegate is in your Congressional District, or your At-Large district. And contact them, and ask them to represent your voice.

### **‘I Need Leaders!’**

**Schlanger:** ... You connect this question of the economic crisis and the necessity for a candidate who will take on these policies, to the technical side of it, as opposed to merely those who are sort of stuck in the "Gee, it was unjust, it was fraudulent, it was corrupt." Yes, it was, but *why*? What's behind this?

**Thomas:** Yes, what's behind it? And I pray—I would like to give all my money to get in front of these superdelegates, and these party leaders, and make a little speech to them! I would like to say to them, that we have a lot of Americans that are hurting right now! And we need to take this very seriously: And this is not about "toeing the party line." This is not about having fear. I need leaders! I need *leaders*! George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin. I need you guys to stand up and say, "We need to do the *right thing* by the American people. Not worry about money in our pockets, not worry about this power position that we're going to get. And we need to do the right thing."

I *wish* that I could get that opportunity. I know I won't, because I'm just a photographer in Los Angeles doing this thing out of my apartment. But those are the kinds of questions I've been asking myself throughout this election: *Where are the leaders?!* Where are our party leaders, who are willing to come forward and saying, "We need to *stop this!*" We need to stop subverting a process that's been put in place forever. We need to stop doing everything that we can, to help one candidate, and block another one! We need to consider the fact that we have a large delegation of Democrats in this country that are *hurting* right now! And that, we can't take a chance on the next four years, we can't risk four more years of having bad leadership to get us out of this!