

Dear Concerned Democrats:

Over the past year, I have done my best to work constructively with the leadership of our local party in order to better organize, structure and comport ourselves to the public. Sadly, these efforts have all failed. My year on the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee (MCDCC) has been marked with great disappointment in our leadership.

In the coming days and weeks, I will not be surprised if more scandals, more public letters and possibly even protests occur against the MCDCC. I also fully expect that our Muslim neighbors and friends are going to begin to demand answers as to how and why Lt. Gov. Aruna Miller could so brazenly support the Islamophobic leadership of India, going so far as to attend Narendra Modi's state dinner. I do not know why Chair Ahmad and her allies have spent so much effort trying to shield the Lt. Gov from criticism over that fact. Democracy depends on transparency, and if what we have all seen in the past year with MCDCC is any indication, our local democracy is being dangerously threatened.

I want to thank the many central committee members, precinct officials and countless party volunteers and community activists who have confided in me their deep misgivings about our local party. I also want to thank the responsible and unrelenting members of the press who have helped to shed light on how terribly broken Montgomery County's Democrats have become. For me, truth-telling is a civic duty. On the other hand, for the small clique surrounding the MCDCC chair, dishonesty and abusing the public's trust is their core mantra.

In the time I have served on the MCDCC, our chair Saman Qadeer Ahmad attempted to turn us against our county's public school teachers. Our leadership prevented the passage of a rule eliminating the longstanding conflict of interest wherein central committee members vote themselves into public office. As far as I can tell, her agenda is to get herself appointed as a delegate at all costs. We have seen the chair refuse to recognize in public gatherings MCDCC members with whom she's had a personal falling out. We have seen people who have the power to circumvent democratic elections and install their friends in power abuse that privilege time and again, like when Chair Ahmad threatened me by invoking the name of Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller.

What we need now more than ever is wholesale reform of the role political parties and their central committees play in our governmental system. Each central committee member is supplanting the votes of tens of thousands of Marylanders. We must be held to a far higher standard.

Democrats are supposed to stand with our teachers and organized labor. Shamefully, Chair Ahmad tried to block support for our teachers earlier this year when a resolution was introduced (and passed against her wishes) in solidarity with them. Even more shamefully, at least one black female candidate for state delegate has shared with a number of party leaders that Chair Ahmad did everything in her power to disqualify the candidate from being considered for District 17 Delegate. Specifically, Chair Ahmad repeatedly attempted to convince the candidate to withdraw for reasons that were dismissed by the candidate's own legal counsel! There is also the ongoing scandal of the Chair's completely unnecessary cover-up of the IRS lien against our party for ignoring our tax obligations five years ago.

A lot of this could have been circumstantially bad luck. Party politics has always been chaotic and not for the faint of heart. But what is not so easily explainable is the demeaning attitude Chair Qadeer Ahmad, Arthur Edmunds and Marjorie Goldman have taken towards other members of the committee whenever it has pleased them. Nor is it as easily explainable why Chair Ahmad has tried so hard to shut out the press, the public, and the majority of her fellow central committee members from basic decision-making and agenda-setting. Democrats are supposed to work together to make a difference, not infuse an all-volunteer board with cinematic quality high school drama, which is exactly what so many of our monthly meetings have become. To quote a flummoxed party elder, the MCDCC is a toxic environment, and the party's leadership bears full responsibility for that.

With all of this in mind, I believe I can better serve our democracy as a private citizen. My ethics refuse to allow me to continue with the charade that the local party is indeed serving the people of our county. Instead, I am convinced that MCDCC represents everything that is wrong with electoral politics today. I call for an outside independent investigation into the operations and governance practices of the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee, and I resign effective immediately.

I myself will be boycotting the Fall Gala. I hope the Central Committee exercises due diligence in selecting a replacement from District 15 who can serve with the integrity and transparency this committee sorely needs.