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## ELECTION 2008

## Clinton asks Obama to support do-over

BY KATHLEEN GRAY • FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER • MARCH 19, 2008

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Sen. Hillary Clinton challenged her Democratic opponent Sen. Barack Obama to support a primary election that will allow Michigan voters to have a voice in the selection of the next president.

## ADVERTISEMENT

“The people in Michigan and particularly Democrats in Michigan know that Michigan matters in both the primary and general election,” she told a crowd of more than 300 people at the AFSCME Local 25 union hall in Detroit. “If the Democrats send a message that we don’t care about your votes, I’m sure that John McCain and the Republicans will be happy to have them.”

Another Democratic primary, however, was looking less likely today as supporters of Obama in Michigan and his campaign cast doubt on whether they will support a do-over.

State Sen. Buzz Thomas, a Detroit Democrat and cochair of Obama’s campaign in Michigan, said he wouldn’t support legislation for another election because the proposed bill “is so riddled with problems that they overwhelm any possible positive outcome for the people of Michigan.”

Clinton, however, was not willing to give up on the idea of another primary, calling the right to vote one of the bedrocks of democracy.

“Sen. Obama speaks passionately on the campaign trail. Today I’m urging him to match those words with actions,” she said. “I have accepted a plan for a new vote in Michigan. It’s been approved by the Democratic National Committee. I call on Sen. Obama to do the same. Does he mean what he says or does he



SUSAN TUSA/Detroit Free Press

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., speaks at a campaign rally Wednesday in Detroit.



Sen. Hillary Clinton signs posters after speaking at AFSCME Local #25 on Wednesday in Detroit.

(SUSAN TUSA/Detroit Free Press)

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not?"

"Ignoring Michigan and Florida would be a grave mistake."

Many in the crowd were hoping to cast their ballots for Clinton in a second primary election, but most seemed resigned to the fact that probably wasn't going to happen.

"That will be a real shame if it doesn't happen," said Crystal Menz, a 25-year-old Detroit resident who heard about the Clinton visit during an Estates and Trust class at University of Detroit-Mercy law school last night. "I absolutely think she is the most predictable candidate with what she's going to do with the country."

In addition to Thomas' comments, Obama's campaign sent a lengthy e-mail to reporters detailing why a do-over primary would be difficult to achieve before June 3, the date set for a new primary.

Connie Thomas, 59, of Detroit, said she still hopes to vote, "but it's not looking good."

And Lisa Machesky, 37, an undecided voter from Birmingham, seemed to echo Clinton's message that Democrats risk losing Michigan votes if a do-over primary isn't held.

"The January election just wasn't fair," she said. "They've got to find a way to get their act together on something as simple as voting. Or John McCain is going to start looking better and better."

Clinton tried to appeal to Michigan voters by talking about the auto industry and the reluctance of the administration of President George W. Bush to even meet with the Big 3 domestic automakers.

"It was amazing to me that the Big 3 auto companies and the United Auto Workers had to beg for years to just have a meeting with the president. I met more with them than the president," she said. "The Big 3 and the hard-working members of the UAW deserve some help as they make the transition into higher gas mileage economy. That's all they were looking for, a partner in this fight to save American jobs."

As she waited for Clinton to arrive, Jennifer McCann, 43, of Detroit said she began supporting her when she was first lady.

"After Bill's first term, I believed that if anyone could be the first woman president, it would be Hillary," McCann said.

"I want Michigan's vote to count this time," McCann said, "I hope she receives the delegate votes she deserves. She represents me: I'm a single mother, student and a diabetic with no health insurance."

Jennifer's daughter, Melissa McCann, 20, agreed with her mother.

"This will be my first election. I want to see Hillary in office because I think she'll bring change. I've seen what my mom has gone through."

*Free Press staff writer Kristale Ivezaj contributed to this report.*

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