

Calling the game

by The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Hillary Clinton pledges to stay in the game. OK, but then the Democrat's superdelegates should invoke the eminently logical tradition of not playing the bottom of the last inning when the winner has been decided.

We had urged superdelegates to wait until the Democratic National Convention to commit. But it makes little sense to wait that long now.

It is nigh on impossible that Clinton can catch Barack Obama in the delegate count. By staying the course, Clinton can ensure that the ultimate Democratic nominee is bloodied and the party divided, whether Obama gets the nomination or she somehow accomplishes the impossible.

The latter would require superdelegates to ignore much of the voting. It also would require the party seating and apportioning delegates from two states - Michigan and Florida - that broke party rules in setting their primary dates and whose contests were pretty much uncontested as a result. Obama wasn't even on the ballot in Michigan.

The number of uncommitted superdelegates (about 270) exceeds the number of delegates at stake in the remaining six contests (217) through June 3. Because the delegates at stake in the primary will be divided proportionately, there is no way either Obama, who is roughly 184 delegates shy of securing the nomination, or Clinton can win enough to put either over the top.

That puts the superdelegates, mostly party and elected officials who can support whoever they want, in charge. They should do what they were created to do - act in the interest of the party to choose a nominee in the event of deadlock or what is tantamount to it. We're at that point.

Obama, who has earned the title of presumptive nominee, should be their choice. Heaven forbid that we should instruct a candidate to drop out if he or she believes there is a reasonable chance - even a candidate whose own checkbook is keeping her campaign afloat, and even if doing so could demonstrate selfless statesmanship. But given the numbers, we have no problem expecting a process to function as it was intended.

Yes, voters in five states and Puerto Rico have yet to vote in their primaries. No one is saying that they shouldn't. No one is saying that their delegates then shouldn't be seated and apportioned. But it's that last part - the apportioning - that should compel the superdelegates to commit.

Under virtually no scenario will Obama's delegate lead disappear going into the August convention.

Superdelegates: Call the game, and let's get on with the series.

Reprinted from The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel â€“ CNS.

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