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NEWS RELEASE

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RHODE ISLAND DEMOCRATS TO SUPPORT CONG. KEITH ELLISON FOR DNC CHAIR *Party Leaders Gather in Atlanta Feb. 25 to Name New Leader; McNamara Cites Ellison's Ability to Coalesce and Expand Party Base*

WARWICK, R.I. – Joseph M. McNamara, Chair of the Rhode Island Democratic Party, announced today that he and three other leaders of Rhode Island's Democratic Party will be casting their votes for Congressman Keith Ellison (MN) as the next Chair of the Democratic National Committee (DNC,) at the February 25 DNC meeting in Atlanta. State Party Vice Chair Hon. Grace Diaz, DNC members Edna O'Neill Mattson and Frank J. Montanaro - as the Party-elected Rhode Island delegation – will also be casting their votes for Ellison.

"Rhode Island is proud to have voted Democrat in the last Presidential election, and to be among the many political and elected leaders nationwide who will vote for Congressman Ellison as our Party's next leader," McNamara said. "In the aftermath of this nation's elections, it's clear we need someone who can work at a grassroots level, mobilize energy and support on social and economic justice issues, and rebuild our Democratic base. Congressman Ellison has the ideas, passion and skills to get this job done."

"We have already seen, since this president's inauguration," McNamara said, "millions of Americans marching and protesting to voice their outrage at President Trump and GOP policies and actions. The calls to our office have been incredible – hundreds of people asking how they can volunteer and make a difference. We are rebuilding our caucuses and engaging folks like not in recent history. The voices of our base must be heard; and our Party will be rebuilt from the ground up," he said.

Late yesterday, Congressman Ellison's team released [a statement](#) about the endorsement by five states to date, including Rhode Island.

McNamara noted that all the candidates for the DNC Chair brought unique talent and passion to this race, but "Ellison particularly has extensive experience as an elected leader, has worked with the political base and our younger and millennial voters, and 'gets' progressive issues. He knows how to bring everybody to the table to execute change." McNamara said.

“As a Muslim and African American who has fought for social justice in office, he understands the danger of stigmatizing populations based on color, race, creed and gender identity – and will fight for justice for all,” McNamara said.

According to Congressman [Ellison’s official biography](#), he has represented the Fifth Congressional District of Minnesota in the U.S. House of Representatives since January 4, 2007, fighting for civil and human rights, economic justice, and environmental issues. His “guiding philosophy” is based on “generosity and inclusion,” according to the site, and was exemplified by his work to write legislation called the *Credit Cardholder’s Bill of Rights of 2009*, to prevent lenders from increasing customers’ interest rates if they had late payments with another lender.

McNamara met with Congressman Ellison on his recent visit to Rhode Island and determined his passion to build the party on a 50-state basis and increase the voices of the local and state parties, along with his proven experience and appeal among voters of all ages “well qualified him to become our Party’s next leader.”

****COVERAGE INVITED****

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