

It's Time to Come Home, Democrats

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Wyoming Democratic Party

October 7, 2024

To my Democratic friends who are currently registered as Republicans, I have a simple question: Are you better off now than you were two or four years ago? Harriet Hageman is a member of Congress, Chuck Gray is Secretary of State, and the "Freedom" Caucus continues to gain prominence throughout our state. Many of you joined the Republican ranks with a strategy to moderate the GOP by supporting candidates who reflect a more balanced perspective. You did this because you love Wyoming, want the best for our future, and believed it was the best way to counter right-wing extremism.

It hasn't worked.

Certainly not in this recent primary. The dismally low voter turnout only underscores a deeper truth: having to choose between two unappealing options just isn't inspiring enough to bring people to the polls, nor is it moving our state legislature any closer to the middle.

This is not a criticism; it's a call to action. You care about Wyoming's future, and now, more than ever, we need to build a party that truly stands for progress, inclusion, and the future of our state.

Democrats, it's time to come home.

Republican voters are our friends, neighbors, and family. But their party, at both state and national levels, has lost its way. While they stoke fear and division, we celebrate joy and unity. While they flirt with authoritarianism, we stand firm for democracy. The GOP seems intent on dragging us backward, but we continue to be the party of progress and look toward the possibilities of the future.

If you need more convincing, look at the good work our Democratic legislators are doing right here in Wyoming. They're the ones fighting for expanded access to affordable healthcare, championing policies that support working families, fighting for reproductive freedom, and tackling the issues that matter head-on. At every level of government, Democrats are leading the charge to find innovative solutions, modernize and diversify our economy, and create good-paying, sustainable jobs. They're working to ensure that every child has access to quality public education. Democrats are standing up for LGBTQ+ rights, protecting freedoms, and addressing the urgent challenges of mental health and addiction in our communities.

This is the kind of leadership we need—leadership that builds up, not tears down.

This work is not just about this election cycle; it's about every cycle to come. It's about building a foundation that ensures the voices of all Wyomingites are heard—now and for years into the future. To do that, we have to improve as a party. Our leaders, volunteers, and voters must work

together to recruit and support candidates who reflect our values and vision for Wyoming. That effort becomes so much easier when we're all actively engaged in building our own party, rather than trying to save one that's not our responsibility to salvage.

Let's make the time between now and Tuesday, November 5—the early voting period to Election Day—our Homecoming 2024. If you've been voting strategically as a Republican, feel disillusioned by the GOP, stayed home on primary day, or haven't voted in several years, head to your County Clerk or voting location and register or re-register as a Democrat before you cast your ballot.

Now is the time to come back to the Wyoming Democratic Party and build a future we can all be proud of—together.

Joe M Barbuto has been Chair of the Wyoming Democratic Party since 2017. Previously, he served as a State Representative for WY House District 48, Sweetwater County Treasurer, and Chair of the Sweetwater County Democratic Party.

