

POLITICO | Ben Smith | Pressure on DCCC in Cao seat primary

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Pressure on DCCC in Cao seat primary

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee's endorsement of state Rep. Cedric Richmond in a Louisiana primary has prompted a prominent local Democrat — and supporter of Richmond's primary rival — to write DCCC Chairman Chris Van Hollen to voice his complaints.

Recent news reports on Richmond include a **misdemeanor charge** (<http://www.frumforum.com/dem-candidates-past-brawls-suspended-licenses>) in a bar fight and the **suspension** (http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2010/08/four_democrats_vie_to_challeng.html) of his law license over allegations he listed a false address.

Stuart Smith (<http://www.smithstag.com/attorneys/stuart-h-smith-01.14.10-01.05/>), a New Orleans trial lawyer and major Democratic donor who backs state Rep. Juan LaFonta in the contest, wrote Van Hollen:

I was shocked and dismayed when I learned that on Friday of last week you and your committee designated Cedric Richmond for the Red to Blue program for the upcoming elections. Whether you know it or not, Mr. Cedric Richmond has significant opposition in New Orleans, Louisiana for the seat. Specifically State Representative Juan LaFonta is running a serious and strong campaign against State Representative Cedric Richmond....

It is reprehensible that you would get involved in a local primary such as the one occurring in the Second Congressional District of Louisiana. You should be aware that State Representative Richmond has had some serious black marks on his record including suspension from the Louisiana State Bar Association for perjury on an election application.

These facts will come out in the general election if Mr. Richmond succeeds in beating State Representative LaFonta. It is apparent to me that the DCCC did not perform due diligence in connection with this endorsement and is simply doing a favor for one of Mr. Richmond's friends. Absent withdrawal of the

endorsement and/or withholding of funding until after the primary to Mr. Richmond, please remove me from any and all mailing lists associates with the DCCC and do not contact me ever again. I am sure my other friends who are supporting State Representative Juan LaFonta feel the same way.

Richmond, however, has the primary's largest war chest by far and endorsements from former Sen. John Breaux and Sen. Mary Landrieu.

E-mails DCCC spokesman Jesse Ferguson:

Local and national Democratic leaders including the Congressional Black Caucus PAC are supporting Cedric Richmond because he is in the strongest position to defeat Congressman Cao who stood against President Obama's historic health insurance reform. The DCCC is committed to electing a Democrat so that New Orleans and Jefferson Parish families will have a representative who will stand with the President and Democratic priorities.

Smith's full letter is after the jump.

August 2, 2010

VIA US MAIL, FACSIMILE AND EMAIL
Representative Chris Van Hollen
Chairman of Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee
430 S. Capitol St. SE
Washington, DC 20003
Facsimile (202) 485-3512

Dear Representative Van Hollen:

As a lifelong Democrat and major Democratic financial contributor, I was shocked and dismayed when I learned that on Friday of last week you and your committee designated Cedric Richmond for the Red to Blue program for the upcoming elections. Whether you know it or not, Mr. Cedric Richmond has significant opposition in New Orleans, Louisiana for the seat. Specifically State Representative Juan LaFonta is running a serious and strong campaign against State Representative Cedric Richmond. State Representative Juan LaFonta has significant support amongst traditional Democratic heavy hitting campaign donors. I suggest you look at State Representative Juan LaFonta's campaign finance report. Included in the report are noteworthy contributions by very prominent trial lawyers to State Representative Juan LaFonta's campaign. State Representative Juan LaFonta is also endorsed by numerous unions amongst others. As someone who has maxed out to the DCCC in the past and has raised or contributed over \$500,000 for Democrats in the past six years I must protest your actions in this case. It is reprehensible that you would get involved in a local primary such as the one occurring in the Second Congressional District of Louisiana. You should be aware that State Representative Richmond has had some serious black marks on his record including suspension from the Louisiana State Bar Association for perjury on an election application.

These facts will come out in the general election if Mr. Richmond succeeds in beating State Representative LaFonta. It is apparent to me that the DCCC did not perform due diligence in connection with this endorsement and is simply doing a favor for one of Mr. Richmond's friends. Absent withdrawal of the endorsement and/or withholding of funding until after the primary to Mr. Richmond, please remove me from any and all mailing lists associates with the DCCC and do not contact me ever again. I am sure my other friends who are supporting State Representative Juan LaFonta feel the same way.

Sincerely,

Stuart H. Smith
Cc
President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500
Facsimile (202) 456-2461

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
235 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Facsimile (202) 225-4188

Representative Charlie Melancon
404 Cannon House Office Bldg
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