**Chairman Ben Ray Luján**

**New Dems Dinner**

**Washington, DC**

**February 3, 2016**

**WELCOME/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

* Hi everyone, thanks for being here tonight
* I want to thank New Dem PAC Chair **Derek Kilmer** for helping to organize and host this event
* As well as thank all the Members and New Dems here:
  + **Leader Nancy Pelosi** [DROP-BY]
  + **WHIP Steny Hoyer**
  + **Caucus Vice-Chair Joe Crowley**
  + **New Dem Chair Ron Kind**
  + **New Dem Tony Cardenás**
  + **New Dem Whip John Carney**
  + **New Dem Joe Courtney**
  + **New Dem Vice-Chair Gerry Connolly**
  + **New Dem Vice-Chair Susan Davis**
  + **New Dem Suzan DelBene**
  + **New Dem Bill Foster**
  + **New Dem Vice-Chair Jim Himes**
  + **New Dem Juan Vargas**
  + **New Dem and Frontliner Scott Peters**
  + **New Dem Vice-Chair Jared Polis**
* Thank you all for working with the DCCC and being a part of our team.

**IOWA**

* I’m sure the Iowa Caucus is still on all our minds, so I’ll begin with that:
* On the Republican side, Cruz and Trump have already caused irreparable damage to the Republican brand, and this Cruz-Trump victory will further force the other nominees and down-ballot Republicans to the extreme right.
* With their victory, Cruz and Trump are now a heavier anchor around House Republicans.
  + And regardless of who the nominee is, the damage has already been done.
* Meanwhile, Democrats will continue debating real solutions for hardworking people across the country, creating a clear contrast with the Republicans and a clear choice for voters come November.

**STATE OF PLAY**

* It’s up to us to continue to work to create that clear choice
* We have been able to make a lot of progress, unemployment has fallen from above 10% to 5% today; there have been 70 consecutive months of private sector job growth. And gasoline is below $2.00 a gallon.
* But—families feel like their paychecks are not growing, students feel that college is out of reach, and seniors feel that retirement is further away.
* We need to boost the **enthusiasm** **and support of** **women, young people and communities of color.** 
  + They form our Democratic base, and their high level of engagement, coupled with the support of our traditional white voters, is key to our success.
* We must remind these voters that Paul Ryan and House Republicans are not on their side.
* We must remind voters that this country needs more Democrats who will fight for voting rights and a clearer path to the ballot box, for an affordable education, and for clean air to breathe and clean water to drink.
* That is what Democrats fight for, and we have to ensure that hard-working families know about the hard work we are ready to put in on their behalf.

**CLOSE**

* We must have a plan.
* And the DCCC has a plan – **The Majority Project**.
  + The Majority Project is a comprehensive, long-term strategy that will help Democrats win in 2016, 2018, 2020 and beyond.
  + I’ve spoken on it with some of you before, and I’m happy to go over it more if you have questions.
* But beyond our plan, the DCCC also has you.
  + I’m thankful for the hard work and support of the **New Dems**.
  + Several New Dems are an important part of our DCCC Leadership Team
  + And the New Dem Coalition is an important part of our diverse Democratic caucus
* Together, we form a stronger team
* Thank you for pledging your support.
* Thank you for continuing to step up and make a difference

[*end speaking program*]