31 May 2017

Dear Members of the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee,

My name is Steven Cenname, resident of District 19, and I am applying for the honor of appointment to the at-large seat of the Central Committee being vacated by Johntel Greene. In the time that I have known Johntel, she has been very effective in mobilizing the next generation of Montgomery County Democrats. If selected, I hope to continue those efforts.

As a 24-year-old and lifelong Montgomery County resident, I was embarrassed by the turnout among my age group in the 2014 election, both in the primaries and the general. Since then, I became a precinct chair in District 19, specifically precinct 04-019. At a precinct chair meeting the first week of May, I was heartbroken by the fact that I was one of the very few millennials in attendance. There are numerous precinct chair vacancies throughout the county, and most of these will remain unfilled until young people are mobilized. Because of the aftermath of the 2016 election, we have a unique opportunity to have a turnout among those under 30 that we have never seen before in 2018.

I believe I am the right person for this appointment because I have a proven track record of getting politically aloof groups of people energized. One of my first political leadership jobs was president of Salisbury University's chapter of the College Democrats. This was a very difficult job because SU has a reputation as a very politically apathetic campus, largely due to its relative isolation from the major policy centers when compared to College Park and schools in the Baltimore area. I did not let this environment stop me, because my presidency coincided with the 2012 election, where President Obama, the DREAM Act, and marriage equality were all on the ballot. The group's status as a registered student organization provided me with the ability to hold a number of events on campus to get students excited for the election including voter registration drives, policy panels and debates, rallies, and meet-and-greets with elected officials. Promotion of these events is difficult in any college environment, because everyone always has something else going on like studies and parties. But my passion for marriage equality kept me going even on the days when mobilization efforts would seem futile. I would often spend four hours each day calling and emailing students and with the staffs of elected officials I planned to bring to campus because I knew that in the end students would want to fight for something larger than themselves. While I was never too happy with the fact that a major civil rights issue was being directly voted on, it did boost the morale of new voters because it gave them the sense that what they were doing was making a difference. Since they essentially got to vote directly on a piece of legislation, it made them feel like they had the power of an elected official.

If selected, I hope to bring this experience to my native county to bring more young people to the polls. Lessons from 2012 show that when people feel that the rights of themselves and their loved ones are threatened, even the most politically agnostic person will go to the polls. Nowhere is this more important than in the era of Trump. That is why I humbly ask for your vote.

Sincerely,

Steven D. Cenname