

What You Need to Know About the New Leader of the Democratic Party

While the vote was close on both the first and second ballots, it was never really in doubt Saturday at the Democratic National Committee's establishment would install former Secretary of Labor Tom Perez as its new chairman.

Needing 218 votes to win the vote, Perez received 235 votes on the second ballot after several other candidates dropped out. U.S. Rep. Mark Ellison (D-Minn.) received 200 votes on both the first and second ballots, proving that while the "Bernie Sanders wing" of the party has grown powerful, President Barack Obama's pull with establishment carries just a tad more weight.

In a show of "unity," Perez appointed Ellison as his second-in-command.

Obama has said he plans to remain actively involved in the political discussion in America, despite an unwritten rule that former presidents refrain from doing so out of respect for their successors. Sanders and other liberal progressives have been trying to force the Democratic Party farther to the left since the trouncing it took in the 2016 election.

The Washington Times reports many grassroots groups were disappointed by the outcome:

"This incredibly disappointing result is another missed opportunity for a Democratic Party desperately trying to regain relevance and proves, once again, how out of touch party insiders are with the grassroots movement currently in the streets, on the phone, and at town halls nationwide," said Jim Dean, chair of Democracy for America.

Progressive groups have been frustrated with the direction of the party and they suffered another setback Saturday after DNC members voted to table a resolution that would have revived a ban on corporate donations and on corporate lobbyists serving as at-large members.

That frustration has boiled over into calls for Mr. Sanders to follow the lead of millions of American by breaking away from the Democratic Party and to launch a new third-party.

So what do we know about Perez? A lot:

- He is the first Latino to lead the DNC.
- He is a graduate of Brown University, Harvard Law School and the John F. Kennedy School of Government.
- He used Pell Grants and worked as a trash collector to pay for college.
- He worked as a federal prosecutor and as deputy assistant attorney general for civil rights under Attorney General Janet Reno.
- He worked as a special counsel to Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.)
- He served as the director of the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the final years of the Clinton administration.
- He taught clinical law and law and health program at the University of Maryland School of Law.
- He was also a part-time member of the faculty at the George Washington University School of Public Health.
- While serving as Maryland secretary of labor, he pushed for the expansion of gambling in the state and the legalization of slot machines there.
- He served as the assistant attorney general for the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice in the early years of the Obama administration.
- He called adoption of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act one of his top priorities at the DOJ, saying, "LGBT individuals not being currently protected against

discrimination in the workplace is perhaps one of the most gaping holes in our nation's civil rights laws."

- In 2008, his division launched a years-long investigation into Maricopa County, Arizona, Sheriff Joe Arpaio, which ultimately led to charges of misconduct that led to his losing reelection in 2016.
- In 2009, his division filed a lawsuit against a New York school over alleged harassment of a "transgender" student.
- In 2010, while testifying before Congress, he incorrectly stated that the Obama administration did not have any influence over the decision to dismiss charges in the New Black Panther voter intimidation case. An Inspector General's report found he didn't know the statements he made were incorrect, but he should have asked more questions that would have revealed the truth.
- In 2011, his division filed a lawsuit against South Carolina's voter I.D. requirement.
- In 2012, his division filed a lawsuit against a Minnesota school district over a policy that prohibited talking about homosexuality in the classroom.
- He led the inquiry into the Sanford, Florida, Police Department's handling of the Trayvon Martin shooting.
- He served as Secretary of Labor from 2013 to 2017; his confirmation vote was the first ever to fall on strict party lines.
- During the confirmation process, it was determined that he had "manipulated justice and ignored the rule of law" with his decision not to intervene in a whistle-blower case against Saint Paul, Minnesota, in return for the city's dropping a case before the Supreme Court that would have undermined a liberal legal theory on discrimination.
- He was an early contender to be former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's running mate in the 2016 presidential election. {eo}