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■ PARTY POLITICS

Doug Jones: Alabama Democratic Party “a disaster,” leadership should be replaced

After an abysmal 2024 election showing, former Sen. Doug Jones believes the ADP executive committee should make a change in party leadership now.

By **JOSH MOON** Published on December 5, 2024 at 7:57 am CST



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Then-Sen. Doug Jones during a 2020 press conference.



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× he man who helped orchestrate a change in leadership of the

Alabama Democratic Party in 2019 is again calling for the party's executive committee to replace its leaders, saying that the party is "an unmitigated disaster" that can't field candidates or raise significant money.

Former U.S. Sen. Doug Jones, who led what became a Democratic National Committee effort to change ADP's bylaws and usher in new leadership in 2019, said during a recent interview on the Alabama Politics This Week podcast that the party, which went through another leadership change in 2022, is in a hopeless situation because many Democrats and would-be Democrats don't care for current leadership.

"It is just an unmitigated disaster that has nowhere to go," Jones said. "They can't even get a quorum to hold a meeting, and the reason they can't get a quorum to hold a meeting is because the leadership of the party wants to kind of do all these weird shenanigans to change bylaws to get rid of caucuses, to deny people the ability to participate. They cannot raise any significant money. They're not gonna be able to recruit candidates.

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Doug Jones: Alabama Demo...



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“It is time. I mean, it is long since past time for the state party, and this is falls on the executive committee, to demand



leadership right now. Not in two
when we have primaries again and
a new state party is elected. They need
to demand new leadership right now.”

Jones’ comments are the latest in a
long-running battle between two
consistently warring factions within
ADP – one faction led by longtime
Alabama Democratic Conference
chairman Joe Reed and current ADP
chairman Randy Kelley and another
faction led by Jones and many younger
members of the party. Since the 2019
change, the two sides have often
publicly criticized each other, with each
side blaming the other for various
missteps and nefarious actions.

However, the Jones faction has
consistently held the favor of the
national party, and has also enjoyed
more widespread public support, while
Reed and Kelley have been able to hold
tightly to a core group of supporters –
primarily longtime members of the
ADC, the party’s Black caucus.

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It was the power of the ADC that was at issue in 2019, and which prompted the DNC to push for bylaws changes. While the changes that were ultimately forced through were widespread and complex, they essentially boiled down to this: The Alabama Democratic Party's bylaws at the time, by defining "minority" as only Black, gave incredible power to Reed and ADC to control the party leadership while also shutting out other minority groups that had long been recognized by the DNC.

Reed and his supporters cried foul, claiming that the efforts were racist and intended only to weaken the Black vote within the party. While that clearly wasn't the case, and the percentage of Black members of the party's executive

ittee went unchanged, Reed and have continued to make that claim.

And in 2022, after rallying support within the ranks, Kelley was able to win back control of the party for the ADC faction. Almost immediately, he and Reed set about undoing the new bylaws and eliminating several committees that gave strong voting power to other minority groups. That drew the ire of the DNC, and it further fractured an already struggling party.

In the months since, ADP leadership has been called to D.C. to be reprimanded by the national party, has failed repeatedly to draw a quorum to meetings in which it intended to further alter the bylaws, was widely criticized for failing to field candidates in the 2024 election cycle and was embarrassed by a weird situation in which Reed and Kelley were accused of failing to vote for Kamala Harris to be the party's nominee after Joe Biden stepped aside (both Kelley and Reed vehemently deny that allegation, but the party was mysteriously short two delegate votes at the convention).

“We had the lowest Democratic turnout this time that we’ve ever had,” Jones said of the 2024 election turnout in Alabama. “The votes were down. In

na, we had the lowest voter
it since 1988., okay? And it's
because of the very thing you said,
people don't think that their vote
counts, and we can't recruit candidates
to get their name on the ballot when
they're gonna get embarrassed. And
that is a real problem. (They) came back
from the convention ... and they
immediately wanna have a change of
our bylaws again. That's all they wanna
do – they wanna challenge the DNC,
they wanna challenge the bylaws. It's
time that they just that they just retire.

“You can you can make a change, and
everywhere I've gone in the state, there
are Democrats wanting a home. There
are Democrats out there, but they're not
going to support this Democratic party
because the leadership seems to only
care about themselves, and their little
small cabal, and that has nothing to do
with race and has everything to do with
those who try to grab and maintain
power.”

Jones, who is close to Biden and was
widely considered a top choice to be
attorney general at one point, also
spoke about Biden's decision to pardon
his son, Hunter, and about AG Merrick
Garland's painfully slow prosecution of
Donald Trump. You can hear the entire
interview at the [Alabama Politics This](#)

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Josh Moon is an investigative reporter and featured columnist at the Alabama Political Reporter with years of political reporting experience in Alabama. You can email him at jmoon@alreporter.com or follow him on Twitter.

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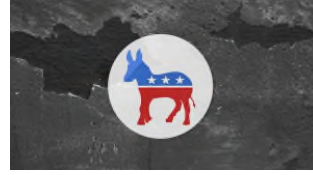
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