

Cartoons for the Classroom



Presented by NIEonline.com and the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)

Between the lines

According to Congresspedia, "Superdelegate" is an informal term for some of the delegates to the Democratic National Convention.

Unlike most convention delegates, the Superdelegates are not selected based on the party primary primaries and caucuses in each U.S. state. Instead, the Superdelegates are seated automatically, based solely on their status as current or former elected office-holders and party officials. They are free to support any candidate for the nomination.

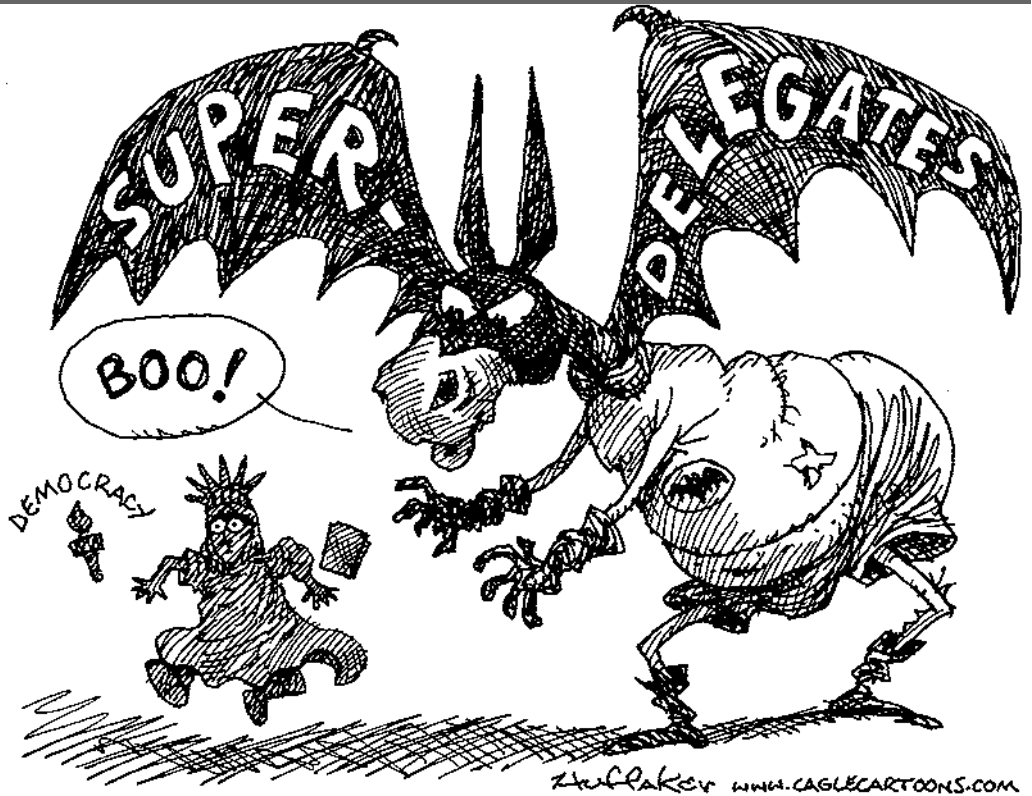
Since the race between Sen. Barack Obama and Sen. Hillary Clinton for the Democratic Party nomination for president is so close, neither candidate is expected to garner the 2,025 out of 4,049 delegates to win the nomination outright.

That means Superdelegates may actually make the decision for the party regardless of who led in the popular vote.

That's never happened before. A Democratic nomination race has never come down to the votes of Superdelegates at the convention.

Get out your newspaper

Gather a collection of political cartoons from your newspaper dealing with the election. Using the Cartoon Evaluation Worksheet (available online at the NIE Website) analyze each cartoon and explain the issues addressed.



Sandy Huffaker / courtesy Caglecartoons.com

Tooning into the Campaign

Invasion of the Superdelegates

Talking points

1. Sandy Huffaker uses a number of symbols to get his message across: Bat wings on a menacing donkey, a startled Statue of Liberty, the torch labeled Democracy. Define the symbols as presented in this toon.
2. Critics of the concept of the Superdelegates insist that it's wrong that these delegates can thwart the will of the people by not being required to vote for the primary or caucus winner in their state. A candidate could win the popular vote yet lose. Huffaker's cartoon illustrates this point as the evil Superdelegate threatens democracy. Do you agree with the cartoon?
3. American democracy requires that there be a way to break ties. Who decides if no presidential candidate wins a majority in the Electoral College? (Look it up!) If the Senate is deadlocked on a vote, who is empowered to cast the tie-breaking vote? (Look it up!) Are their rules in your state legislature to handle ties? Whose vote breaks a tie there? (Look it up!)

Additional resources

Association of American Editorial Cartoonists
<http://editorialcartoonists.com/>

More from Caglecartoons.com
<http://cagle.com/politicalcartoons/>

More from Congresspedia: <http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Superdelegates>