



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
July 10, 2007

**Contact:** Rick Minor, 850-445-1914  
[RickMinor@yahoo.com](mailto:RickMinor@yahoo.com)

## **Presidential Candidate Barack Obama to keynote Leon Dem Party's Collins-Steele Dinner**

*Obama's participation demonstrates strength of local organization*

TALLAHASSEE, FL – Today the Leon County Democratic Party announced that Presidential candidate and U.S. Senator Barack Obama will serve as the keynote speaker for the Party's second annual Collins-Steele Dinner, which will be held on August 24<sup>th</sup> at the University Center Club in Tallahassee.

“Senator Obama's participation at our annual dinner will be an historic event in Tallahassee,” said Rick Minor, Chair of the Leon County Democratic Party. “We're honored to have the Senator as our keynote speaker. This is a testament to the great progress our local party has made over the past two years.”

“The Leon County Democratic Party has come a long way,” said Florida Democratic Party Chair Karen Thurman. “Two years ago they had no office, phone line, or website. But thanks to an outstanding team of hard-working Democrats, they've earned a reputation throughout the statewide Democratic community as a local party on the move. They're seen as a very capable host for a leading Democratic presidential candidate such as Senator Obama.”

The event is the Leon County Democratic Executive Committee's (DEC's) major fundraiser for the year, and is expected to draw nearly 500 attendees. Doors will open at 5:30 pm with the dinner program starting at 6:30 pm sharp.

Tickets are currently available online at [www.LeonDems.com](http://www.LeonDems.com) and are \$100 each. Members of the Leon County DEC or other Florida DEC's may purchase tickets at the discounted rate of \$80 each.

The Collins-Steele Dinner, named in honor of two Tallahassee legends - Governor LeRoy Collins and civil rights leader C.K. Steele - is the premier fundraising event for the Leon County Democratic Party. Last year's Collins-Steele dinner was a sold-out event featuring former U.S. Senator Max Cleland.

*(continued)*

Senator Barack Obama (D-Illinois) is a leading candidate for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States. Born in Hawaii to a Kenyan father and an American mother, Obama is the only African-American currently serving in the U.S. Senate. He attracted national attention when, as a candidate for the U.S. Senate, he delivered the keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. In November of that year, he won a landslide victory to the U.S. Senate, receiving 70% of the vote.

The Leon County Democratic Executive Committee is the official representative body of registered Democrats in Leon County. It has supervisory power and jurisdiction over Democratic Party affairs in Leon County, and its members serve as the “Democratic voice” of their constituency in the precinct they represent.

The efforts of the Leon County DEC led to remarkable victories in the 2006 elections. In terms of percentage voter turnout, Leon County was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> out of the 67 Florida counties in the general election. This is Leon County’s highest ranking in at least ten years. In the statewide race for Chief Financial Officer, Leon County voters contributed 36,000 votes to Alex Sink’s margin of victory. And in local races, a Democrat was elected in every local race that had a Democratic candidate.

Some of the Leon DEC’s other accomplishments include the following:

- Early last year, the Leon DEC established a permanent office location, phone number, and website, [www.LeonDems.com](http://www.LeonDems.com).
- The DEC also launched a political TV ad contest with Democratic National Committee (DNC) Chair Howard Dean, Florida Democratic Party Chair Karen Thurman and local community leaders serving as judges. The winning ad was professionally produced and aired on local television during the weeks preceding the general election.
- Using a new, state-of-the-art voter file database developed by the state Democratic Party, the Leon DEC distributed 15,000 mailers listing state and local candidates and made nearly 40,000 phone calls to voters.
- The Leon DEC’s field activity was often recognized by the Democratic National Committee, which posted some of the local party’s campaign work as “Best Practices for Success” on its national website. For an example, see: [http://www.democrats.org/a/2006/10/best\\_practices.php](http://www.democrats.org/a/2006/10/best_practices.php)

*NOTE: As a general rule, the Leon County Democratic Executive Committee does not as an organization endorse candidates prior to their nomination. Individual DEC members, however, are free to actively support and campaign for whichever Democratic candidates they choose.*

###