

LigoranoReese

Protesters file for permits for Democratic convention

By Julia Terruso
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Two Brooklyn-based artists want to set up an ice sculpture spelling *The American Dream* during the Democratic National Convention and then let it melt in the hot July sun.

"This is art for social change. Our point is to galvanize people and provoke discussion," said Marshall Reese, who, with his wife, Nora Ligorano, submitted a permit for the structure.

Theirs is one of four early requests sent to the city for permits to demonstrate during the convention.

A pro-Bernie Sanders group, an anti-fracking organization, and an anti-nuclear proliferation group also requested permits.

Reese and his wife brought similar installations to the last four national conventions melting the word *democracy* at Republican and Democratic conventions in 2008 and the phrase *middle class* in 2012.

The couple do not publicly endorse candidates or parties. They hope to carve an identical sculpture in Cleveland for the Republican convention.

The 16 letters, weighing 300 pounds each, would go up near City Hall on July 25 and last just one day.

Reese said the breakdown of the letters can be very moving and take on a dual meaning.

"There's the idea that opportunity is diminishing," he said. "For a lot of other people there may have never been an American dream. It's a very exclusive idea in certain demographics, and maybe the time has come to make it disappear."

Hillary Clinton may be the favorite to win the Democratic nomination, but Bernie Sanders supporters submitted a permit for a 500-person rally during the convention.

"If Clinton winds up on the ticket, it's going to be heartbreaking for a lot of people, and we'll be there to say this is a movement and make sure we have somewhere to direct people that's productive and peaceful," said Drew Geliebter, one of several organizers of the march.

The Sanders group submitted a permit for locations around Philadelphia for July 24.

Geliebter, who grew up in the Northeast and now lives in Ardmore, said the goal is to create a festival-type atmosphere welcome to everyone.

The largest permit request so far is from the Food and Water Watch, a member of a larger anti-fracking coalition. The rally, slated to bring in 5,000 people, would begin at City Hall on July 24 and end at Independence Hall.

"What better place to call for a clean-energy revolution than a place like Independence Park, where all those years ago a different revolution was planned?" said Seth Gladstone, the group's deputy communications director.

The anti-fracking message is especially relevant in Pennsylvania, Gladstone said.

"Fracking is something that's been going on for a long time, something Gov. Tom Wolf has condoned," he said. "So this will not just be about America. It's also what's happening here."

The week of the convention, a 40-foot inflatable nuclear missile, tethered to sandbags, will hover in Philadelphia - permit pending.

The Global Zero group, which advocates for the end of nuclear proliferation, submitted an application for a 200-person rally.

"We'll be unleashing the missile in the heart of Philadelphia to remind presidential candidates that nuclear weapons are the elephant in the room," said Lillyann Daigle, a field organizer. "They're a huge drain on financial resources in the U.S. and an issue of national security."

Applications for permits must be submitted five days before the proposed activity or 60 days if the event requires city assistance. Permits are required for gatherings larger than 75 people.

The Managing Director's Office of Special Events processes applications in cooperation with the Philadelphia Police Department and Civil Affairs.