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## Low-Income Participation 2/21/1982 Houston Chronicle Article “Dems studying proposal for low-income delegates”

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# Dems studying proposal for low-income delegates

A proposal that at least 30 percent of delegates to Democratic Party conventions be of low- or moderate-income is being considered strongly by a Democratic National Committee special commission studying participation in party activities.

Rep. Mickey Leeland, who heads the committee's 16-member Commission on Low and Moderate Income Participation, said Saturday the proposal "is under serious consideration."

"There is a consensus among the members," Leeland of Houston said, without further elaboration.

The commission will make a preliminary report this week to the party's executive committee and present its final recommendations for policy changes at the March 26 meeting of the DNC in Washington. The proposed changes will be considered at the Democrats' mid-term convention this summer in Philadelphia.

Leeland's commission met Saturday at the University of Houston, conducting the last of a series of regional hearings on party participation.

The regional hearings, he said, "have found many, many deficits" in the par-

ticipation of low- and moderate-income Americans in party affairs.

"We've seen many obstacles and few affirmative programs," Leeland said. "Our charge is to find ways to knock down those barriers."

Among the measures under consideration is the 30-percent requirement, a proposal endorsed by ACORN, a national consumer-oriented group. ACORN also is seeking financial aid that would allow low-income persons to attend party conventions, and the establishment of "councils" that would give organizations of low- and moderate-income Americans an official role in party affairs.

But J. Willcox Brown, a commission vice chairman, suggested commission members may suggest the 30-percent mark be considered a guideline rather than a requirement.

"We're more likely to support affirmative action leading to that, than get into some kind of quota system," Brown said.

Among people who testified before the commission were representatives of ACORN, the League of United Latin American Citizens and labor organizations. About 100 people attended the hearing.