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## Progressive Democrats are a sham

By Brock Parker/ Journal Staff  
Thursday, August 26, 2004

**T**aking a page out of pop star Prince's book, two local political groups are changing their name to dodge breaking the law.

Progressive Democrats of Somerville and Cambridge are dropping the donkey label from their names after the Massachusetts Democratic Party said the political groups use of "Democrat" in their titles is against the law.

The political groups will soon be known as the Progressives of Cambridge, formerly known as the Progressive Democrats of Cambridge, and the Progressives of Somerville, formerly known as the Progressive Democrats of Somerville.

The name change is being made, said Jesse Gordon, a member of the Somerville group, because the state Democratic Party is threatening legal action against the groups because they don't have permission to use the word "Democrat" in their name.

Under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 56, Section 40, anyone who wants to use the title of a standing political party must obtain permission from the party.

But the real reason the Democrats are ordering the progressive groups to cease and desist is because of the groups' affiliation with the Massachusetts Democratic Scorecard, Gordon said.

The Scorecard is a Web site that keeps tallies on the voting records of state legislators.

Gordon said the state party doesn't like the Web site, [www.massscorecard.org](http://www.massscorecard.org), and is doing whatever it can to stop it.

"They don't want to make any Democrats look bad for the primary," Gordon said.

But Jane Lane, a spokesman for the state Democratic Party, said the upcoming election has nothing to do with the party ordering the groups to stop using the party name.

"The process just hasn't been followed in this case," said Lane.

Lane said the progressive groups have not properly applied to the state Democratic Party for permission to use the Democratic name. Lane said the state party has been telling the progressive groups to drop the name for two years.

In an Aug. 16 letter to Gordon, the state party stated it has "grave concerns that these [progressive groups] have knowingly misrepresented themselves as legitimate and recognized committees approved by the Massachusetts Democratic Party."

Rather than face legal action, Gordon said the progressive groups will go forward with a name change.

"We're not going to fight them on this; we're going to fight them on the Mass. Scorecard," Gordon said.

But the state party's cease-and-desist order is also fueling the fire of state Rep. Tim Toomey, D-Cambridge, who has blasted the Somerville Progressive Democrats for the process they used in endorsing Toomey's opponent, Avi Green, earlier this summer.

"They call themselves Democrats, but they don't tell us who they are," Toomey's campaign treasurer

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Bob Perry said Tuesday. "It gives total credence to the fact that they are not a legitimate group."

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