

# WASHTENAW COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY BYLAWS

*Adopted September 13, 2009  
Most recent update: May 5, 2018*

## ARTICLE 1. NAME

This organization shall be known as the Washtenaw County Democratic Party (WCDP). It shall consist of the Officers, Executive Committee, County Oversight and Organizing Committee, and all members of the Michigan Democratic Party and all duly elected Democratic precinct delegates residing in Washtenaw County.

## ARTICLE 2. PURPOSE

**Section 2.1.** The purposes of the WCDP include:

- To recruit, train, organize and support an effective, cohesive, and motivated cadre of officers, committee members, delegates, precinct workers and party activists in order to further Democratic Party goals, principles, and programs;
- To provide aid and support to official Democratic Party candidates who are working to promote the interests, values, and activities of the Democratic Party and whose districts rest wholly or partially within Washtenaw County; and
- To involve all of its members in implementing the previous two purposes by promoting their active and meaningful participation in the business of the WCDP including, but not confined to, providing the membership an opportunity to know more about Democratic candidates, organizing campaign activities, approving Party expenditures, establishing policies and rules, and taking positions on political issues.

**Section 2.2.** The WCDP shall be a non-profit organization and upon its dissolution, all assets and real and personal property of the Party and its committees shall revert to the benefit of the Michigan Democratic Party. No part of the income or assets of the WCDP shall inure to any of its members except for the reimbursement of actual expenses, approved by the WCDP, or a contribution for electing a member to office if the WCDP so approves.

## ARTICLE 3. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

**Section 3.1.** All membership and business meetings of WCDP at all levels shall be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance or disability.

**Section 3.2.** No tests for membership in, nor any oaths of loyalty to, the WCDP shall be required or used which have the effect of requiring prospective or current members of the Democratic Party to acquiesce in, condone or support discrimination on the grounds of actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance or disability.

**Section 3.3.** The time and place for all membership and business meetings of the WCDP on all levels shall be publicized fully and in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons. Such meetings must be held in places accessible to all Party members and large enough to accommodate all interested persons.

**Section 3.4.** The WCDP, on all levels, shall support the broadest possible participation without discrimination on grounds of actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance or disability.

**Section 3.5.** The WCDP shall publicize fully and in such a manner as to assure notice to all interested parties a full description of the legal and practical procedures for selection of and qualifications for WCDP officers and representatives on all levels. Publication of those procedures shall be done in such a fashion that all prospective and current members of the WCDP will be fully and adequately informed of the pertinent procedure in time to participate in each selection procedure at all levels of the WCDP organization. Posting this information on the Party web site (<http://washtenawdems.org>) and making it available upon request shall be sufficient under this section. The Statutory Vice-Chair shall take responsibility for this publication.

**Section 3.6.** Proportional voting shall be used in the election of delegates and alternates to any Convention, and members of the Executive Committee.

**Section 3.7.** All rules and bylaws of the WCDP at all levels shall be consistent with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party and shall be available on request in writing to any member of the WCDP.

**Section 3.8.** No rule shall be adopted at any level of the WCDP which would require a person to cast a vote or be recorded as voting contrary to that person's judgment.

**Section 3.9.** On all questions of procedure not resolved by the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party or these Bylaws, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be used.

**Section 3.10.** The Chair and Vice-Chair of any unit, Committee, Caucus or Convention of the WCDP that has both a Chair and Vice-Chair shall be of a different gender.

**Section 3.11.** Votes shall not be taken by secret ballot at any meeting of the WCDP at any level.

**Section 3.12.** Any rule adopted by WCDP shall be made available upon request to any member of WCDP. A WCPD member may make such a request in writing, or via email, to the WCDP Secretary.

#### **ARTICLE 4. MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 4.1.** Membership of the WCDP shall consist of all members of the Michigan Democratic Party residing in this county.

**Section 4.2.** Precinct delegate positions shall be apportioned and delegates elected in accordance with Michigan statute and the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party.

**Section 4.3.** The Officers, Executive Committee and County Oversight and Organizing Committee of the WCDP shall be selected in accordance with the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party and these bylaws.

**Section 4.4.** In order to vote at any Convention, Caucus or meeting of the WCDP, a person must be a member of the Michigan Democratic Party for at least thirty (30) days prior to that Convention, Caucus or meeting.

## **ARTICLE 5. MEETINGS**

**Section 5.1.** The regular meetings of the Executive Committee shall be on the day of the month at the location and time designated in the meeting notice. At least five (5) days' notice shall be given of the date, time and place of the meeting. Notice shall be given by email, and may also be given by phone, text message, or postal mail if a working email address is not available. The Executive Committee shall meet 6 times a year. A quorum shall exist at an Executive Committee meeting when 1/3 of the Executive Committee members are present.

**Section 5.2.** The full County Oversight and Organizing Committee shall meet quarterly to review the activities of the Executive Committee. At least five (5) days' notice shall be given of the date, time and place of the meeting. Notice shall be given by email, and may also be given by phone, text message, or postal mail if a working email address is not available.. A quorum shall exist at a County Oversight and Organizing Committee meeting when a 1/4 of the County Oversight and Organizing Committee members are present.

**Section 5.3.** Special meetings of the Executive or County Oversight and Organizing Committee may be called by a majority of the members of the Executive Committee or County Oversight and Organizing Committee, respectively. At least five (5) days' notice shall be given of the date, place, time and purpose of the special meeting. Notice shall be given by email, and may also be given by phone, text message, or postal mail if a working email address is not available.

**Section 5.4.** Subject to the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party and these Bylaws, all meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition).

**Section 5.5.** The Officers should meet more frequently than the Executive Committee to plan and carry out the day-to-day execution of Party business.

## ARTICLE 6. OFFICERS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND COUNTY OVERSIGHT AND ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

### Section 6.1. WCDP Executive Committee.

**a. Membership.** The Executive Committee is composed of the automatic and elected members as described in 6.1.a.i - 6.1.a.ii below. Executive Committee elections are held in even-numbered years, not later than twenty (20) days after the November government elections.

i. Executive Committee Members - Automatic.

The most recent Democratic Party nominees for countywide office and the county commission shall automatically be members of the Executive Committee.

The most recent Democratic Party nominees for each State or Federal office listed below, with districts partly or entirely within Washtenaw County, shall automatically be members of the Executive Committee.

Michigan State Senate  
Michigan State House Representatives  
United States House of Representatives

If more than one State or Federal district lies entirely or partly in Washtenaw County, the most recent nominee for each district shall automatically be members of the Executive Committee.

Should any automatic member of the Executive Committee decline to serve, their seat shall be considered existing and vacant, and shall be counted for purposes of calculating the number of Elected members of the Executive Committee.

ii. Executive Committee Members - Elected.

The number of elected Executive Committee members shall be twice the number of automatic members.

In each even-numbered year, the WCDP shall hold a County Convention. The County Convention shall be held not later than twenty (20) days following the government elections in November. The WCDP chair shall call the membership to convention. The chair shall ensure the call to convention is prominently published on the WCDP website not less than 15 days prior to the date of the convention. Additionally, the chair shall notify members by email, and may also notify members by phone, text message, or postal mail if a working email address is not available.

At the County Convention, the WCPD members attending shall elect a number of Executive Committee members equal to twice the number of automatic members. If at the time of the County Convention, any automatic members have declined or are unable to serve, their vacant seat(s) shall also be filled at the same election.

**b. Purpose.** The purpose of the Executive Committee is to provide fair and equitable leadership for the WCDP and oversight for the work of the Officers and the rest of the WCDP.

**c. Vacancies.** If a vacancy occurs in the position of elected member of the Executive Committee, the remaining elected members shall fill the vacancy.

**d. Meetings.** The Executive Committee shall meet 6 times a year. The Executive Committee shall keep minutes of all meetings which shall be available to all Party members and the County Oversight and Organizing Committee upon request to the WCDP Secretary in writing or via email.

**e. Budgeting.** The Executive Committee shall have final approval of the annual and election budgets as presented by the Executive Board and shall regularly review receipts and expenditures at its meetings as reported by the Treasurer. The Executive Board consists of the officers of the Executive Committee.

## **Section 6.2. WCDP Officers**

**a. Election.** Within thirty (30) days of any County Convention at which Executive Committee members were elected, the Executive Committee shall choose statutory and other officers authorized in sections 6.2.a - 6.2.f. The statutory officers (chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer) shall be voting members of the Executive Committee. The other officers shall not be voting members of the Executive Committee unless they were otherwise elected pursuant to procedures in Section 1.

**b. Chair -** The Chair shall convene and preside at all Executive Committee meetings and have such other duties as are usual to the office of County Chair, or that may be required by this organization.

**c. Statutory Vice-Chair -** The Statutory Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair in the discharge of his/her duties and shall temporarily assume the duties and responsibilities of the Chair in his/her absence.

**d. Secretary -** The Secretary of this organization shall keep an accurate record and minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Executive Committee, Executive Board, and County Oversight and Organizing Committee. The Secretary shall keep and preserve all the books, documents, correspondence, records, minutes, effects, and any other property of this organization, and when a new secretary is elected the past secretary shall forthwith deliver to the newly elected secretary all the aforesaid items kept and preserved during his/her tenure of office. The Secretary shall see that proper notification is given to the Executive Committee and County Oversight and Organizing Committee of their meetings. The Secretary shall, within thirty (30) days of any rule being adopted by WCDP, submit that rule to the Corresponding Secretary of the State Central Committee.

**e. Treasurer -** The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial receipts and disbursements of this organization subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. The funds of this organization shall be deposited in banks or credit unions and shall be drawn upon only by checks signed by the Treasurer as long as the expenditure is included in an approved budget or otherwise approved by the Officers or Executive Committee.

The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring WCDP compliance with all applicable rules including State Elections Board and Federal Election rules and filing of all required reports with the appropriate agencies with review by the Executive Committee.

The Treasurer shall make financial reports (detailing receipts and disbursements since the last report) at every Board and Executive Committee meeting and more general financial balance information at all County Oversight and Organizing Committee meetings.

When a new Treasurer is elected, the past Treasurer shall forthwith deliver to the new Treasurer the funds and all the books and records kept during his/her tenure in office.

**f. Committee Chairs** - In addition to the 4 Statutory Officers the Executive Committee shall select the following officers that will also serve as vice-chairs of their corresponding standing committees.

1. Vice-Chair for Resolutions, By-laws and Policy
2. Vice-Chair for Fundraising
3. Vice-Chair for Communications shall be responsible for the editorial content of the website, email communications with members and supporters, the newsletter, and press releases, and public relations; social media excepted.
4. Vice-Chair for Legislative Programs shall act as liaison to key elected officials and develop venues and forums for interaction with these key elected officials.
5. Vice-Chair for Programs shall be responsible for issue advocacy, town halls, voter education, potential candidate education, and candidate forums.
6. Vice-Chair for Visibility shall be responsible for tables and booths at events, rally and parade participation, t-shirts and bumper stickers.
7. Vice-Chair for Precinct Organization shall be responsible for voter registration, voter identification and persuasion, get out the vote, poll challenger and greeter recruiting, training, and organizing, and voter education as it relates to these activities.
8. Vice-Chair for Outreach shall be responsible for outreach to communities and organizations, diversity, and service projects.
9. Vice-Chair for Membership shall be responsible for recruiting new members, encouraging membership renewals in the Michigan Democratic Party within the County, recording and maintaining attendance records for the Executive Committee and County meetings and programs and functions of the WCDP, and maintaining a database of members and supporters.
10. Vice-Chair for Social Media shall be responsible for all social media content, visibility, rapid response, and online engagement
11. Vice-Chair for Administrative Affairs shall be responsible for administrative oversight of Party affairs, and shall have oversight over WCDP's physical offices
12. Vice-Chair for Social Events shall be responsible for planning and advertising social events for members of WCDP

The Executive Committee may from time to time select officers in addition to the twelve officers specified above which in its judgment are proper to carry out the purposes of the Party. The WCDP Officers are referred to collectively as the *Executive Board* and shall fulfill the duties required of the County Committee as provided in MDP rules.

**g. Meeting.** The Officers shall meet at a minimum monthly, and otherwise at the discretion of the Statutory Chair.

**h. Purpose.** The main purpose of the WCDP Officers is to plan and oversee the execution of the day-to-day business of the Party and execute their individual responsibilities as outlined below.

**i. Filling Vacancies.** The Executive Committee shall fill any vacancies in the Officers at any regular meeting by the same method used to elect officers.

**j. Budgeting.** The Board with the help of the Treasurer shall cause an annual budget to

be presented and approved by the Executive Committee every year. In even years the Board will present a separate detailed election-related budget to the Executive Committee for approval after it receives enough information from the Coordinated Campaign to do so.

**Section 6.3.** WCDP Oversight and Organizing Committee.

**a. Membership.** The County Oversight and Organizing Committee shall consist of 2 party members from each precinct within Washtenaw County, plus any additional number of members the Executive Committee may choose to add. However, the total number of County Oversight and Organizing Committee members shall not exceed the total number of precinct delegates allocated to Washtenaw County.

The Executive Committee shall elect the County Oversight and Organizing Committee. The chair and the Executive Committee as a whole shall take care that the County Oversight and Organizing Committee is properly elected within forty-five (45) days of 1 January in each odd-numbered year.

**b. Purpose.** The main purpose of the County Oversight and Organizing Committee is to foster and support the grassroots precinct organization.

**c. Budget Review.** The County Oversight and Organizing Committee shall also review WCDP budget approved by the Executive Committee and may review the activity of the Executive Committee.

**d. Assigned Powers and Duties.** Between meetings of the County Oversight and Organizing Committee, the Executive Committee has all the powers and performs all the duties of the County Oversight and Organizing Committee.

**e. Presiding Officer.** The Vice-Chair for Precinct Organization shall schedule, convene and preside at all County Oversight and Organizing Committee meetings.

**ARTICLE 7. COMMITTEES**

**Section 7.1.** The Chair, subject to the approval of a majority of the Executive Committee, may appoint any additional ad hoc committees and committee Chairs necessary for the work of the organization.

**Section 7.2.** The Vice-Chairs of the Standing Committees are the Vice-Chairs listed in Article VI above.

The Vice-Chairs listed in Article 6, section 2(f) shall be responsible for a Standing Committee of the same name.

These committees may include appropriate subcommittees. The Chair of the County Party shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees.

**ARTICLE 8. RESOLUTIONS**

**Section 8.1.** A resolution is a WCDP statement of position. Statements of positions as to candidates for public office and ballot questions, however, are considered endorsements (see Article 9).

**Section 8.2. Resolutions at Convention:** A resolution may be adopted at a convention. The procedure for handling resolutions at a convention shall be set forth in the call to the convention. If a proposed

resolution is not circulated with the call to the convention, the proponent of the resolution shall provide enough copies so that each person in attendance may have one.

**Section 8.3. Resolutions adopted by Committee:** A resolution may be adopted by the Executive Committee, Executive Board, or the Organizing and Oversight Committee. If a quorum is present, adoption shall be by simple majority.

**Section 8.4. Resolutions by regular or special meeting of the WCDP membership.** A resolution may be adopted by a regular or special meeting of the WCDP membership. If the resolution is proposed for a regular or special meeting of the WCDP membership, the proposed resolution shall be included in the notice of the meeting of the WCDP membership. Adoption shall be by simple majority, but if the written notice required by Section 3 is not given, the resolution may still be introduced, but it requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote to be adopted.

## ARTICLE 9 ENDORSEMENTS

**Section 9.1.** The WCDP shall not make endorsements in any Democratic Party primary or caucus that is contested or may be contested. After the primary or caucus, the WCDP may endorse any Democratic candidate who seeks its endorsement, subject to the provisions of this article and the Michigan Democratic Party rules on endorsements.

**Section 9.2.** A candidate seeking an endorsement must be a member of the Michigan Democratic Party before an endorsement is made. For judicial candidates only, this subsection is subject to any applicable state law or canon of judicial conduct which limits a judicial candidate's membership in a political party.

**Section 9.3.** The WCDP may endorse a candidate in a non-partisan race, either judicial or non-judicial, and may endorse ballot questions. The number of candidates endorsed shall not exceed the number of candidates to be elected to a given office. WCDP shall not consider any endorsement of non-partisan candidates prior to the deadline for filing for that office.

**Section 9.4.** A candidate or supporter or opponent of a ballot question may make a request for endorsement to the WCDP Chair, or to any member of the Executive Board. If a request for endorsement is made to any other member of the WCDP Executive Board, that member shall promptly send the request to the WCDP Chair. Once a request for an endorsement has been received for a non-partisan office, the WCDP Chair, or the Chair's designee, shall contact, via e-mail, any other declared candidates for that office and give those candidates an opportunity to seek the WCDP's endorsement. If the WCDP Chair does not have a working e-mail address for a declared candidate, the Chair or the Chair's designee shall make best efforts to contact the candidate, and shall document, in writing, all efforts undertaken to contact the candidate.

**Section 9.5.** Endorsements shall be made via vote of the general membership. Endorsements shall be made at a general membership meeting of the WCDP, provided that written notice of the endorsement vote has been given to all Party members at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting. WCDP members will receive voting credentials upon entering the general membership meeting. Endorsement votes shall take place as follows:



- a. Any candidate for a race in which endorsements are being considered will be given a reasonable and equal amount of time to address the membership. A candidate may designate a surrogate to speak on the candidate's behalf. If endorsement for a ballot question is being considered, exactly one supporter and exactly one opponent of the ballot question will be given a reasonable amount of time to address the membership. A reasonable amount of time must be allocated for members to ask questions of candidates, and/or of supporters or opponents of ballot questions. Following discussion, members shall vote on endorsement.
- b. If two or fewer candidates are running for a single office, any candidate who receives a majority vote of WCDP members present shall receive the WCDP's endorsement. For a ballot question, any position (i.e., support or oppose) which receives a majority vote of WCDP members present shall receive the WCDP's endorsement.
- c. For all other races, the following procedure shall be followed:
  - i. In advance of the vote, WCDP members will be given blank index cards in a number equal to the number of seats available.
  - ii. As each candidate's name is called out, in alphabetical order, members shall hold a card up for that candidate. Those cards shall be collected and placed in an open box labelled for that candidate.
  - iii. Following the conclusion of voting, all cards shall be counted, in the view of the general membership, and candidates shall be ranked according to the number of votes received. The candidates with the highest number of votes that correspond to the number of seats available will receive the WCDP's endorsement.

**Section 9.6** An endorsement does not imply that a financial contribution will be made.

**Section 9.7** A copy of this article of the bylaws shall be sent to any candidate or supporter of a ballot question requesting an endorsement.

## **ARTICLE 10. AMENDMENTS**

**Section 10.1.** Proposals for changes or amendments to these bylaws shall first be referred to the Rules and Bylaws Committee that shall report its recommendations to the next regular Executive Committee meeting or special meeting called for that purpose.

**Section 10.2.** These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members of WCDP membership, present at a meeting, provided that written notice setting forth the proposed amendment has been given to all Party members at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

**Section 10.3.** These bylaws shall be in full force and effect upon their adoption and shall supersede all bylaws, rules, motions and policies of a contrary nature with the exception the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party.