
GUIDE to the **Michigan Democratic Party** **STATE CONVENTION**

Saturday, February 2, 2019

Cobo Hall
(south end, facing the river)

Registration for Voting Members opens at 7:30 am

First Caucuses at 9 am.

Parking available in the building



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Schedule

7:30 am	Registration begins. Lines can be long, so if you want to vote in the 9am caucus meetings, you'll want to arrive early.
9–10:30 am	Caucus meetings, first round. There are several; you'll have to choose which you want to vote in, though you can also go from one to another.
10:30 am–12 pm	Caucus meetings, second round.
12–12:30 pm	Lunch break
12:30–2:00 pm	Congressional District Meetings (also called Congressional District Caucus Meetings)
2:30–5 pm	State Convention

The full schedule with room numbers will be found at the registration desk, along with any resolutions to be voted on. You'll also find the schedule and room numbers in the Call to Convention at this link: [Full Convention Schedule](#).

What is the Michigan Democratic Party State Convention?

Conventions are the meetings in which political parties do their business: electing leadership, approving rules changes, and making resolutions that help shape the party's platform and direction. The MDP's Spring Convention is really like 3 mini-conventions all in one day:

1) Caucus meetings, 2) Congressional District meetings, and 3) the full State Convention.

1) **Caucuses** are issue- and identity-based organizations within the party, for example the Youth, Progressive, Environmental, and Black Caucuses. They gather to elect their officers and discuss issues of concern to their members. [More on p. 6](#)


2) **Congressional District (CD) meetings** gather to elect their officers, their Executive Committee members, and the district's representatives to the State Party's governing body, the Democratic State Central Committee. The elected positions include 1 Chair, 1 Vice Chair, 1 Secretary, 1 Treasurer, at least 15 members of the District Executive Committee, and Members and Alternates of the DSCC (State Central). [More on p. 7-8.](#)

3) The full **State Convention** gathers all voting members to elect 1 Chair of the MDP and 2 Vice Chairs, and to vote on resolutions. [More on p. 9.](#)

Voting or Running for Party Office at the Convention

In order to hold a Party office or to vote at this convention, a person must have been a member of the Michigan Democratic Party for at least 30 days prior to the convention, or by Jan. 3, 2019.

If you have joined the Party or renewed your membership, but have not received your MDP card, you are still a member if you



registered online by Jan. 3, or your forms were mailed in with a postmark no later than Jan. 3. You can check on your status with your County Party head, or by emailing Megan Lizotte at Membership@MichiganDems.com

Note: If you are a Precinct Delegate, a Democratic elected official or a Democratic nominee, or your membership has expired within the 30-day window, you are exempt from the 30-day requirement and can join the Party up until Feb. 2.

Nominations

The candidates for statewide office are required to show a certain level of support in order to be nominated. You may be asked to sign a nominating petition by volunteers working for their preferred candidate. You may sign petitions for multiple candidates! Signing the petition to nominate someone does not require you to vote for that person.

About Democratic Party Elections

The Democratic Party is committed to the principle of equality in representation by gender and race. As you will see, elections for all positions include provisions to ensure equal representation. When electing delegates (Members) to the State Central Committee, there are a defined number of male and female Members and Alternates; for the Congressional District leadership, the Chair and Vice Chair must be of different genders; and for the leadership of the MDP, the Chair and the two Vice Chairs must be of different races.

The Caucuses

9–10:30 am & 10:30 am–12 pm

There are many caucuses, including the Black, Disability, Environmental, Justice, Labor and Progressive Caucuses, and the brand new Anishinaabek Caucus, which works for indigenous rights (and is spearheaded by WCDP's Andrea Pierce!). For a full list (not including the new Anishinaabek Caucus, which will share the slot with the Environmental Caucus): [Caucus Schedule](#).

The annual MDP conventions are the main, and perhaps the only in-person, meetings of these groups. All caucuses will be holding elections for officers to serve for the next two years during their meetings on 2/2/19. Some will have a prepared program with speakers, and there will often be visits from the candidates for the statewide Party positions.

What do the caucuses do? It all depends on the commitment (and available time) of the leaders and the members of each caucus. By signing in to receive a voting credential, you will be on their mailing list, so you could be asked to support a resolution, to endorse a candidate, or possibly to join in a hands-on organizing effort! With today's communications possibilities it is increasingly possible to organize on a statewide basis.

Note: certain caucuses may require you to have joined before the 30-day window in order to vote. For others, you will just have to sign in at the table outside and be credentialed for the caucus. You will then be a member, and receive updates on their work and projects.

The Congressional District Meetings

12:30pm – 2pm

Congressional District (CD) Meetings bring together Democrats from within each CD for the mission of supporting their Democratic Representative to Congress—or if lacking one, to work toward electing one. CD meetings are a venue where activists from each district can get to know each other and make common cause. (There are regular CD meetings throughout the year, back on your home turf.)

After the lunch break, all of the CDs meet in the same part of Cobo Hall where the caucus meetings were held. They elect their officers and Executive Committee members (their governing bodies) as well as their allotted number of Members and Alternates to the DSCC (State Central). Members sign in here to be re-credentialed just as they did for the caucuses.

The remaining time is usually devoted to hearing from elected officials and from more of the candidates, who are making the rounds as they did in the morning.

More About CDs

Congressional Districts can contain more than one county, or parts of a county, depending on the population (and the level of gerrymandering—but that's another issue). Washtenaw County, for example, is partly in the 12th CD along with parts of Wayne County, and partly in the 7th CD along with a number of other counties.

The State Central Committee

During our Congressional District meetings, we will also elect delegates to the Democratic State Central Committee (DSCC).

The DSCC is the main governing body for the MDP. It reviews and approves the annual budget, and reviews and approves any proposed bylaw changes. It also elects Michigan's allotted number of delegates to the Democratic National Committee (DNC), which will work to define the direction and shape of the national party and its platform.

Any MDP member can be nominated to serve on the DSCC. They meet quarterly around the state, being hosted by different CDs to allow as many people as possible to participate. It's important to have good delegates to the DSCC. Consider running if you are able!

The State Convention

The main convention will convene after the CD conventions in a nearby main exhibit hall. It will begin with reports from the 3 conventions committees (Rules, Credentials and Resolutions). Next will be nominations for each office and comments by the candidates, followed by the vote.

This year there is a hotly contested race for Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, so you will be hearing from MD Alam, Lavora Barnes, Patrick Biange, Greg Bowens, Lisa DiRado, Rochelle Kirby and Nancy Quarles. If you haven't had a chance to hear from them, a video of a forum with Alam, Barnes, Bowen, DiRado and Quarles can be found here: [WCDP MDP Chair Candidates Forum](#). A Google search will get you to their websites or Facebook pages, where they present their visions for the MDP and the crucial 2020 campaign.

For the full list of candidates for Chairs and Vice Chairs, for both the MDP and the 14 Congressional Districts: [Full Candidates List](#).

Other officers (secretary, treasurer) are appointed by the State Central Committee, as is the MDP's Executive Committee.

You will sit with your CD—look for the placards with the number, as the votes are taken by CDs. It may be a vote by credential-raising a slip of paper to be counted—or we may go out to vote with iPads, as was done at the Fall 2018 Nominating Convention, where we chose our candidates for Attorney General and Secretary of State. Again, you must sit in your CD's section for your vote to be counted! The voting process can take some time, so be prepared to stay a good while if you want to be sure to cast your vote.

Know Before You Go: Parking, Meals, Registration Logistics

MEALS: Food is available for purchase in Cobo Hall, but lines will be long, selections are limited and prices are high. You may want to bring a lunch.

PARKING is available both underground and on the roof at Cobo if you arrive before it fills. Although it may be more expensive, typically \$10 for the day, it offers many advantages, especially during winter weather. Proximity makes it easy to leave your lunch and coat in the car, for example, allowing you to circulate more freely. You can park underground via the entrance to the right of Cobo's front entrance, or enter through the Larned Street side.

REGISTRATION The MDP will be at the far south end of the hall, facing the river. Enter Cobo and walk past the main exhibit halls (where other events may be happening) all the way to the far end.

You will need to register to get your member's badge/sticker. The MDP tables are manned by staff and volunteers, and lines will be long. There will be a line for those who have their barcoded membership cards and another for those who don't. (If you don't have a barcoded card, we suggest bringing your ActBlue receipt, ID, and any other proof of membership. You are probably on the list, but mistakes can occur.)

While waiting, you will be able to meet other Dems, and you'll probably be getting flyered by the candidates' supporters!

Glossary

MDP	Michigan Democratic Party
CD	Congressional District
DSCC	Democratic State Central Committee
DNC	Democratic National Committee
Credential	A physical proof that you have registered and are recognized as a member. Used for voting.
Caucus	A group of members who unite to advance a cause or an issue.
Precinct Delegate	A volunteer who is elected, on the primary ballot, to represent and organize their precinct within the County Party.
WCDP	Washtenaw Democratic Party

Credits and Thanks

Many thanks to Michelle Deatrick, DNC Committeewoman, and to Mark LaChey, chair of the LGBT and Allies Caucus, whose Guide to the 2016 convention was a model and a source for this one, and to the Communications Committee of the Washtenaw County Democratic Party.

About the Washtenaw County Democratic Party

The WCDP is thankful to all our dedicated volunteers, working tirelessly to mobilize voters and to organize for the issues essential to maintaining and improving our democracy.

We are experiencing record levels of membership and volunteerism through our Precinct Organizing, Membership, Outreach, and Visibility teams, the WCDP Black Caucus, and many others. We host community forums, educational programs, and more.

As just one example, our precinct organizing committee is working hard to re-vitalize the traditional precinct delegate (PD) system. In 2018, the WCDP organized hundreds of PDs and other volunteers to distribute a Voter Guide, and we hand delivered tens of thousands of Democratic slate cards at the polling places on Election Day.

It is the sincere hope of the WCDP, as we are able to draw on such a large Democratic base, to find ways to share the organizing resources we are developing with others throughout the state.



Join us! Learn how at
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