

PROPOSED WASHTENAW COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY BYLAWS

Adopted September 13, 2009

Most recent update: November 7, 2020

ARTICLE 1 – NAME

Section 1.1

This organization shall be known as the Washtenaw County Democratic Party (WCDP). It shall consist of the Officers, County Committee, and all members of the Michigan Democratic Party (MDP) 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 WCDP 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 WCDP and its committees shall revert to the benefit of the MDP. 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 the WCDP at all levels shall be open to all members of the MDP 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 MDP shall be required or used, including those which have the effect of requiring prospective or current members of the MDP 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 WCDP 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 WCDP website (<https://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 any multiple-position offices, including delegates and alternates to any convention, and members of the County Committee. Two or more positions with the same duties and qualifications under the rules are a multiple-position office.

Section 3.7

The rules of the WCDP are contained in these bylaws which shall be consistent with the Rules of the MDP and shall be available on request in writing to the WCDP Secretary. Changes to these bylaws take effect on the date they are publicly available on the MDP website. The bylaws publicly posted on the MDP website are the only valid bylaws 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 MDP 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 identity.

Section 3.11

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

ARTICLE 4 – MEMBERSHIP

Section 4.1

Membership of the WCDP shall consist of all members of the MDP 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 MDP.

Section 4.3

The Officers and County Committee of the WCDP shall be selected in accordance with the Rules of the MDP 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 MDP for at least thirty (30) days prior to that convention, caucus, or meeting. Precinct Delegates, Democratic elected officials, and Democratic nominees to partisan offices are exempt from the thirty (30) day advance membership requirement. However, Precinct Delegates, Democratic elected officials, and Democratic nominees to partisan offices must be a member of the MDP in order to vote at any convention, caucus, or meeting. Former members of the MDP whose membership has lapsed in the thirty (30) days preceding any convention, caucus, or meeting may renew their membership on the day of the convention, caucus, or meeting.

ARTICLE 5 – MEETINGS

Section 5.1

The regular meetings of the County Committee shall be on the day of the month at the location and time designated in the meeting notice. At least thirty (30) 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 County Committee shall meet four (4) times a year. A quorum shall exist at an County Committee meeting when 1/3 of the County Committee members are present.

Section 5.2.

Special meetings of the County Committee may be called by a majority of the members of the County Committee. 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 5.3

Subject to the Rules of the MDP and these bylaws, all meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition).

Section 5.4

The Officers should meet more frequently than the County Committee to plan and carry out the day-to-day execution of WCDP business.

ARTICLE 6 – COUNTY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 6.1 – WCDP County Committee

6.1.1 Purpose – The purpose of the County 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.

6.1.2 Membership – The County Committee is composed of the automatic and elected members as described in Sections 6.1.2.1 – 6.1.2.2. County Committee elections are held in even-numbered years, not later than twenty (20) days after the November government elections.

6.1.2.1 County Committee Members – Automatic

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

Should any automatic member of the County 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 County Committee.

6.1.2.2 County Committee Members – Elected

Every even-numbered year, the WCDP shall convene at the County Convention. The County Convention shall be held within twenty (20) days following the government elections in November. The WCDP Chair shall ensure a notification of the date of the convention is prominently published on the WCDP website at least forty-five (45) days prior to the date of the convention and the call to convention is prominently published on the WCDP website at least fourteen (14) 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 WCDP members attending shall elect a number of County Committee members equal to twice the number of automatic members. Elected County Committee members shall be members of the WCDP.

6.1.3 Vacancies – If a vacancy occurs in the position of an elected member of the County Committee, the remaining elected members shall fill the vacancy.

6.1.4 Meetings – The County Committee shall keep minutes of all meetings which shall be available to all Party members upon request to the WCDP Secretary in writing or via email. The County Committee may meet by conference call, video conference call, or similar technology, provided all Committee members participating in the meeting can communicate with each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute attendance at such a meeting.

6.1.5 Budgeting – The County 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.

Section 6.2 – WCDP Executive Board

6.2.1 Purpose – The primary role of WCDP Executive Board is to plan and oversee the day-to-day business of the WCDP and execute the responsibilities of the WCDP Officers pursuant to the bylaws.

6.2.2 WCDP Officers – WCDP Officers are the Statutory Officers (Chair, Statutory Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer), Vice-Chairs of the standing committees, and the Chair of the WCDP Black Caucus. They are collectively referred to as the Executive Board. Executive Board members shall be members of the WCDP.

6.2.2.1 Chair – The County Party Chair shall convene and preside at all County Committee meetings and have such other duties as are usual to the office of County Chair or that may be required by this organization.

6.2.2.2 Statutory Vice-Chair – The Statutory Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair in the discharge of the Chair's duties and shall temporarily assume the duties and responsibilities of the Chair in the Chair's absence.

6.2.2.3 Secretary – The Secretary of this organization shall keep an accurate record and minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the County Committee and Executive Board. 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 County Committee of their meetings. The Secretary shall, within thirty (30) days of any rule being adopted by the WCDP, submit that rule to the Corresponding Secretary of the State Central Committee.

6.2.2.4 Treasurer – The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial receipts and disbursements of this organization subject to the approval of the County 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 County 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 County Committee.

The Treasurer shall make financial reports (detailing receipts and disbursements since the last report) at every Board and County Committee meeting.

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.

- 6.2.2.5 Standing Committee Vice-Chairs – In addition to the four (4) Statutory Officers, the County Committee shall elect Officers to serve as Vice-Chairs of their corresponding standing committees described in Section 7.2. Each standing committee shall have two (2) Vice-Chairs.
- 6.2.2.6 Chair of the WCDP Black Caucus – The Chair of the WCDP Black Caucus is responsible for promoting the mission of the WCDP Black Caucus and coordinating the activities of the caucus with the Officers.
- 6.2.3 Election – Within thirty (30) days of any County Convention at which County Committee members were elected, the County Committee shall elect Statutory Officers and Standing Committee Vice-Chairs authorized in Sections 6.2.2.1 – 6.2.2.5. The Statutory Officers shall be voting members of the County Committee. The other Officers shall not be voting members of the County Committee unless they were otherwise elected pursuant to procedures in Sections 6.1.2.2 or 6.1.3.
- 6.2.4 No member of the WCDP Executive Board may hold more than one position on the Executive Board.
- 6.2.5 Meetings – The Executive Board shall meet at a minimum monthly and otherwise at the discretion of the County Party Chair. A quorum shall exist at an Executive Board meeting when a majority (50% + 1) of the Executive Board members are present.
- 6.2.6 Filling Vacancies – The County Committee shall fill any vacancies in the Officers at any meeting by the same method used to elect Officers.
- 6.2.7 Budgeting – The Executive Board, with the help of the Treasurer, shall cause an annual budget to be presented and approved by the County Committee every year. In even-numbered years, the Executive Board will present a separate detailed election-related budget to the County Committee for approval after it receives enough information from the Coordinated Campaign to do so.

Section 6.3 – Removal from Office

- 6.3.1 Any Officer of the Executive Board may be removed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum of the County Committee. This vote shall be taken at the next County Committee meeting or a meeting specifically called for such purpose.
- 6.3.2 Conditions for removal of an Officer include the failure of the officer to perform the duties of the office, the failure to meet the minimum qualifications for holding the office, publicly supporting a non-Democratic candidate running against a Democrat endorsed by the WCDP, or misconduct. No officer shall be removed on the basis of that officer's political opinions, stated in any forum within the WCDP or elsewhere.
- 6.3.3 Any meeting involving the removal of an Officer from office must be called by the Chair or Statutory Vice-Chair of the WCDP or by a notice signed by at least a majority of the members of the Executive Board. The notice must indicate the specific time and place of the meeting and the basis for the complaint upon which the action is founded; and the notice of such meeting shall be served upon each of the members of the County Committee at least ten (10) days prior to such meeting.
- 6.3.4 Any Officer may move to recommend the removal of another Officer at a WCDP Executive Board meeting. If the motion is properly seconded and passed, the recommendation is added to the agenda of the next County Committee meeting or one called specifically for this purpose. Both the Officer in question and Officer who made the original motion, or their designee, will be permitted to address the County Committee prior to the vote to remove.
- 6.3.5 Automatic Removal - An Officer is automatically removed from office if the Officer's primary residence is no longer in Washtenaw County, the Officer's MDP membership has been expired for more than six (6) months, or the Officer has not attended three (3) or more consecutive board meetings.
 - 6.3.5.1 Any Officer who was automatically removed may appeal the removal by making a request to the Executive Board prior to the next Executive Board meeting subsequent to the removal. The request shall be added to the agenda of the next Executive Board meeting and must be approved by a majority of a quorum of the Executive Board. Upon approval, the automatically removed Officer shall be reinstated to the Executive Board.
 - 6.3.5.2 The Chair of the WCDP shall notify a member when they have been automatically removed from the Executive Board.

ARTICLE 7 – COMMITTEES

Section 7.1 – *Ad hoc* Committees

The Chair, subject to the approval of a majority of the Executive Board, may appoint or dismiss any additional *ad hoc* committees and *ad hoc* committee Vice-Chairs necessary for the work of the organization.

Section 7.2 – Standing Committees

Officers of the Executive Board elected to serve as Vice-Chairs pursuant to Section 6.2.3 shall be responsible for their corresponding standing committees. The Chair of the County Party shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees.

- 7.2.1 Fundraising Committee – The Fundraising Committee shall be responsible for raising funds to support the efforts of the WCDP.
- 7.2.2 Communications Committee – The Communications Committee shall be responsible for the editorial content of the website, email communications with members and supporters, the newsletter, social media, press releases, public relations, and branding.
- 7.2.3 Programs Committee – The Programs Committee shall be responsible for general membership meetings, voter education events, town halls, candidate forums, and social events for members of the WCDP.
- 7.2.4 Visibility, Outreach, Involvement, and Community Engagement Committee (VOICE) – VOICE shall be responsible for tables and booths at events, rally and parade participation, civic engagement and issue advocacy, service projects, the sale and/or distribution of physical WCDP promotional materials, and outreach to communities and other organizations.
- 7.2.5 Precinct Organizing Committee - The Precinct Organizing Committee shall be responsible for voter registration; voter identification and persuasion; get out the vote efforts; Precinct Delegate, poll challenger, and poll greeter recruiting, training, and organizing; and voter education as it relates to these activities.
- 7.2.6 Membership Committee – The Membership Committee shall be responsible for recruiting new members; encouraging membership renewals in the MDP within the County; recording and maintaining attendance records for meetings, programs, and functions of the WCDP; issuing credentials for meetings and conventions where voting will occur; and maintaining a database of members, volunteers, and supporters.
- 7.2.7 Administrative Affairs Committee – The Administrative Affairs Committee shall be responsible for administrative oversight of WCDP affairs and shall have oversight over WCDP's physical offices.

Section 7.3 – Subcommittees

Standing committees may have subcommittees or other additional units at the discretion of the individual standing committees' Vice-Chairs.

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 County Committee or Executive Board. 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. The specific language of any resolution to be proposed at a regular or special meeting of the WCDP membership shall be included, in writing, with the timely notice required by Section 3.3. If written notice was provided, the resolution may be adopted by majority vote. If written notice was not provided, adoption requires a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote.

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 MDP rules on endorsements.

Section 9.2

A candidate seeking an endorsement must be a member of the MDP before an endorsement is made. Judicial candidates are exempt from this requirement. The requirement for candidates to seek endorsement and be a member of the MDP is waived for statewide candidates running for federal office once they have secured the nomination or won their primary.

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 or, in the case of a primary, the number of candidates to move on to the general election. 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.

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 or a meeting called for this purpose, 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:

9.5.1 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.

9.5.2 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.

9.5.3 For all other races, the procedure for voting for endorsements shall be set forth in the meeting notification.

Section 9.6

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

Section 9.7

No Officer or other person elected or appointed to a position in the WCDP may endorse any candidate or ballot initiative in any manner that states, implies, or could reasonably be interpreted to imply the endorsement or imprimatur of the WCDP, unless the candidate or ballot initiative has in fact been endorsed by the WCDP. This section shall not be interpreted to prevent any elected or appointed person from giving their personal endorsement to a candidate or ballot initiative.

Section 9.8

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 can be made by any member of the WCDP and shall be submitted to the Vice-Chair of Communications for distribution to WCDP membership.

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 regular meeting or at a special meeting called for this purpose, provided that written notice setting forth the proposed amendment has been given to all WCDP members at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting.