

Sussex County
Delaware
Democratic Party
Rules

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Preamble

WHEREAS the Sussex County Democratic Party strives to be the party of all people; and

WHEREAS we value community involvement, improving our lives, promoting the best candidates, keeping our government responsive and strengthening our local organizations; and

WHEREAS our officers lead with openness to all and encourage dialogue, discussion and pride in our Democratic Party;

Now THEREFORE the Sussex County Democratic Party adopts these rules to establish an open, efficient and flexible political party organization to guide the people of Sussex County, Delaware and to support our democratic republic government with freedom, intelligence and pride as set forth by these rules:

RULE 1. Purpose, Organization and Responsibilities

1.1 Purpose. These Rules are established to govern the organization of the Sussex County Democratic Party (a subdivision of the State of Delaware Democratic Party). More specifically, these Rules are intended to establish to direct committee people representing the districts, the County Committee and the Executive Committee in electing their committee people and officers. To the extent the State Democratic Party Rules defer this governance to the subdivisions, these Rules will exercise that right. To the extent the State Democratic Party Rules direct governance, these Rules will be subordinate and the State Rules will supersede county and local Rules. In the absence of any Rules, fairness and good faith should prevail.

1.2 Organization

- A. The “Sussex County Democratic Party” (SCDP) is all the duly registered democrats residing in Sussex County.
- B. The “Sussex County Democratic Committee” (CC) is all duly elected Sussex County democratic committee people.
- C. The “Sussex County Democratic Executive Committee” (EC) comprise the officers of the CC and all chairs of each Representative District Committees.
- D. The “Representative District Committees” (RDs) are those committee people duly elected and organized from the established State Representative Districts within Sussex County, within each RD. “Election Districts (EDs), as established by the department of elections, are recognized sub-districts for the purpose of choosing committee people and for organizing party activities.
- E. “Officers” are the Chair, two Vice Chairs (one female and one male), Treasurer, Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and Member at Large. Each RD, as a minimum, shall have the following officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The duties of RD officers shall be consistent with these Rules.

The “Chair” is the leader of the organization and directs all its affairs and activities in accordance with the organization’s Rules. The Chair presides at all meetings of the organization, including caucuses and elections, and sits *ex-officio* on all committees.

The “Two Vice Chairs” shall assist the Chair and perform tasks assigned by the Chair. The Vice Chair of the opposite sex of the Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair when the Chair is unable or unwilling to perform the activities/responsibilities assigned to the Chair.

The “Secretary” shall keep general minutes of the meetings including meetings of the EC, and shall be responsible for maintaining the files of the organization, including its financial records.

The “Corresponding Secretary” shall be responsible for all the communication of the organization, including dissemination of meeting notices, agendas, press releases and any public notices required by these By-Laws. In the absence of the Secretary, the Corresponding Secretary shall keep the general minutes of meetings, including meetings of the EC.

The “Treasurer” shall be responsible for keeping accurate and timely records of the organization’s finances and submitting the monthly reports in writing to the Secretary for safekeeping. The Treasurer shall file all financial reports on a timely basis with the Department of Election as required by law.

“Member-at-Large” shall be a voting member and shall report directly to the EC and be responsible to represent Sussex County Democrats at State Democratic meetings promoting the best interest of Sussex County and report local RD concerns to the EC.

- F. “Committee People” are Sussex County Registered Democrats who reside in that RD and have been duly elected to represent the Sussex County Democratic Party for a Specific RD/ED. The committee member shall be a registered Democrats for one year prior to their election.
- G. “Block Leader” or “Neighborhood Leader” are any registered Democrats who reside in that RD and are at any time nominated by any RD committee person in that RD to assist in party building, voter registrations and voting drives. The Block Leader will report to the Democratic Party any neighborhood concerns throughout their term of appointment (by advising the ED committee person and the RD chair). The Block leader shall be expected to contact the assigned registered Democrats residing in their neighborhood or ED at least nine times each year (contact can be by phone, email or in person). The RD chair shall determine the length of the appointment and shall forward the nomination to the EC for approval. The EC shall approve all Block Leader appointments by a majority vote.
- H. “Caucus,” for the purpose of these Rules, shall be a gathering of registered Democrats by RD to choose their Committee People. Notice of the Caucus shall be made directly by mail to existing Committee People and posted by press release to local newspapers and may include at least one local radio station. Notice shall describe the time, date, location and reason for the Caucus. The Notice shall also explain that only registered democrats are eligible to participate. The RDs shall explain that no participants will be admitted into the Caucus after a specified time. The then existing Committee People and its Officers shall organize the Notice and check registrations. Democrat registrations should be confirmed by

a list obtained in a timely manner from the Department of Elections, or by using the Vote Builder software program. The RDs shall keep a record of all participants at the Caucus. Once the Caucus is convened, it may establish its own organization, leadership, and procedures consistent with these Rules.

- I. *The County Chair shall determine the date, time and location of all EC meetings. All Democratic meetings shall be open to all Sussex County registered Democrats.*

1.3 Responsibility

- A. Committee People are expected to attend local, County, and State Democratic functions. Committee People shall be responsible for being involved in their community, for promoting our Party and membership, for communicating with our elected officials, and for recruiting and advancing our Democratic candidates and elected officials.
- B. RDs shall be responsible for organizing their Districts and for promoting the activities of their Committee People. RDs shall foster their local organization's vitality and shall participate in the County and State Democratic organizations.
- C. The CC is responsible for guiding the EC and supporting RDs, raising money, recruiting Democratic candidates, advancing Democratic candidates, supporting and communicating with elected officials and for carrying out all business associated with a political party in order to promote the interests of Sussex County Democrats. The CC shall be the highest authority in the Sussex County Democratic Party organization.
- D. The EC is responsible for carrying out the interests of the CC. The EC shall have authority to form committees, set aside special funds, schedule meetings as determined by the County Chair, issue press releases, recruit and promote candidates and carry out all business in the interest of the Sussex County Democratic Party.

RULE 2. Elections, Vacancies, Replacements and Redistricting

2.1 Elections of Committee People.

- A. The Caucus shall elect Committee People for each RD. Caucuses shall be held for each RD for the purpose of electing its Committee People during the month of January following a presidential election. Notice of the Caucus shall be duly given at least ten days prior to the Caucus, but not more than 30 days from the date of the Caucus. The Caucus may be held within the RD for which Committee People are being elected, or may be held jointly with other RDs in Sussex County.

- B. Each ED is entitled to have three Committee People: a woman, a man, and one additional committee person. The Caucus may elect its entire allotted Committee by electing one slate. Each RD shall take steps to ensure that each committee person resides in the ED they represent and will only elect a committee person living outside of the ED and residing within that RD when no ED resident is available for the committee person's position in that ED. Prior to any slate being considered for nomination, the nominees shall be designated by ED.
 - C. At the Caucus, if more nominees for the Committee People are nominated than exist, the Caucus shall identify each candidate by ED where he or she actually resides. Then, where more than one nominee exists for a specific ED, the Caucus shall vote to choose one. The remaining uncontested nominees may be considered as a slate. For the contested ED, the nominee receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected consistent with 2.1 D herein.
 - D. At the Caucus, an oral vote may be taken for a slate. The results shall be recorded, reported, and kept for at least six months by each RD.
 - E. Committee People shall be elected for a term of four years at elections held in the month of January following the presidential elections and ending at the next Caucus.
- 2.2 Election of RD Officers. RDs shall elect their officers at an RD meeting to be held immediately following the RD Caucus. Each Officer who receives the most votes from all Committee People will be elected. The names of the duly elected Officers shall be sent to the CC Chair forthwith for verification.
- 2.3 Election of EC Officers. The CC shall elect the EC Officers at the EC meeting to be held in March following a presidential election. Each Officer who receives the most votes from all Committee People will be elected. The names of the duly elected Officers shall be sent to the State Chair forthwith. These Officers shall serve a four-year term on the EC.
- 2.4 Vacancies of Committee People, RD Officers and CC officers.
- A. In the event a Committee Person's position is relinquished for any reason whatsoever, the RD may nominate and elect a new Committee Person for the RD. Such Committee Person shall be elected who receives the most votes from the RD. This procedure may be followed by the RDs at any time to fill vacancies, notwithstanding, however, the requirements for a Caucus under 1.2 and 2.6 herein. Any change in Committee People shall be sent to the EC Chair for verification.
 - B. In the event a CC Officer's position is relinquished for any reason whatsoever, the EC shall first send notification to the County Committee people regarding the

EC's intention to select and fill the position with a new Officer without the need to call a meeting of the CC.

2.5 Replacing Committee People. A Committee Person shall be required to relinquish his or her position if the RD:

1. Determines that he or she is not fulfilling his or her responsibilities,
2. Sends certified notice to the Committee Person informing him or her of the RD's concern and intent to replace him or her,
3. Allows the Committee Person to respond at the next RD meeting, and
4. Votes at the meeting where the Committee Person had the opportunity to be heard to replace the Committee Person by a two-thirds vote of the RD.

The term "not fulfilling his or her responsibilities" will include, but not be limited to:

1. Failure to attend monthly RD meetings (unexcused).
2. Failure to follow responsibilities as defined under State, County and RD Rules.
3. Failure to maintain confidentiality of voter information and records.
4. Failure to report to County Chair any criminal action defined by Delaware Code, excluding minor motor vehicle violations.
5. Endorsed personally and publically any candidate not on the Democratic ticket.

2.6 Replacing Officers. Officers of the RD or EC shall be required to relinquish his or her office if the RD or CC:

1. Determines that he or she is not fulfilling his or her responsibilities,
2. Sends certified notice to the Officer informing him or her of the RD's or CC's concern and intent to replace him or her,
3. Allows the Officer to respond at the next RD or EC meeting, and
4. Votes at the meeting where the Officer had the opportunity to be heard to replace the Officer by a two-thirds vote of the RD or EC

2.7 Redistricting. Every ten years, the RDs' geographical bounds may change. Therefore, it will be necessary for the pre-existing RDs to reorganize. If changes are made within 30 days of the redistricting, any RD affected by the change shall call a meeting of its pre-existing Committee People. At this meeting, the RD shall consider whether they have lost or gained Committee People and Officers.

- A. If the RD has lost Committee People, no reorganization is necessary. If Officers have been lost, the RD shall then elect Officers pursuant to 2.2 herein.
- B. If the RD has gained Committee People or EDs, then the RD shall reorganize. First, at this called meeting, the RD shall elect Officers consistent with 2.2 herein. Second, if the RD now has new EDs, the RD shall call a Caucus within 30 days (notice shall be consistent with 1.2 G, except it shall be sent at least seven days prior to the Caucus). At this Caucus, the RD may elect new Committee People

for the EDs and may elect Committee People for EDs not previously represented. Pre-existing Committee People are entitled to complete their terms.

- C. If a new RD has been created, that RD shall call a meeting of its Committee People and elect Officers consistent with 2.2 herein. If an RD Chair is placed in a new RD, that Chair shall coordinate the reorganization. If more than one RD Chair is placed in a new District, then both Chairs shall coordinate the reorganization. If no pre-existing RD Chair is placed in a new RD, the RD Chairs who lost Committee People within the new RD shall be entitled to complete his or her term. For all EDs in the RD that are not then represented, a Caucus shall be held consistent with 2.2 C herein.
- D. If RD Caucuses have been held because of redistricting, the RD shall call a meeting within 30 days of the Caucus to elect Officers.
- E. Once an RD has reorganized, the County Chair and State shall be sent a complete list of names, addresses, phone numbers and emails of all Committee People by ED. In addition, the RDs shall include this information for each Officer elected by the RD.
- F. The County Chair shall have authority to resolve disputes involving reorganization after redistricting. The Chair shall be guided by the SCDP's intent to use the redistricting as a time to encourage interest in our Democratic grassroots organization and foster new members.

RULE 3. Meetings, Quorums, Proxies, and Filing Fees

3.1 Meetings

- A. All meetings of the organization shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
- B. The organizational official designated to preside at the CC Caucus and any meetings convened to elect CC officers or to modify these By-Laws shall appoint a Parliamentarian to rule on procedural matters in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
- C. RDs shall meet at least monthly during at least nine months of the year. RDs should be prepared and obligated to participate in the CC meetings.
- D. The EC meeting times and dates shall be determined by the County Chair.

3.2 Quorum. No less than one-third of the members of the CC, EC or an RD, including a simple majority of the Officers, shall constitute a quorum for any business.

- 3.3 Proxies. If a Committee Person is unable to attend, he or she may send a written proxy carried by a designated registered Democrat. The proxy shall be valid if held by the designated attending participant. One proxy shall be held by one designee only. The proxy shall be signed by the Committee Person and specifically authorize the substitute to act in place of the eligible participant.

RULE 4. Annual Audit

Each November, the Chair shall appoint three Committee People who are not RD Chairs to serve on a committee (Audit Committee) to conduct an audit of the organization's financial records. The audit does not have to be done by a paid professional. The EC shall elect a chair of the Audit Committee and report the Audit Committee's findings at the January meeting of the EC and prior to the election of officers in the January following the presidential election. The Audit Committee shall submit the written report to the Recording Secretary for inclusion in the organization's official files. The Treasurer shall be available to assist the Audit Committee.

RULE 5. State Convention

The States Rules shall govern the procedures for convening the State Convention.

RULE 6. Grievances

If a registered Democrat, Committee Person or Officer has a dispute with the SCDP, RD, CC or EC, he or she shall notify the RD (from whence the grievance originates) or the EC within ten days of the knowledge of the occurrence of the event. If the EC receives such notices, it may direct that the RD consider the matter. If, after the RD or EC has considered the matter, the aggrieved party may appeal the matter to the CC. All appeals must be in writing and sent by certified mail to the Chair of the CC. In considering such an Appeal, the County Chair shall appoint a five-member Ad Hoc Appeals Committee, consisting of five Committee People from different RDs, none of whom may reside in the aggrieved party's RD. The Appeals Committee shall notify the aggrieved party of a hearing date not more than 30 days from the date of the Appeal notice. The hearing will allow all interested parties to present witnesses and explain the charges. The Appeals Committee shall decide what is relevant and may take written information for the record. The Appeals Committee then shall make a written recommendation to the CC which shall vote on final disposition, if any, at its next regularly held meeting.

RULE 7. Amendments

These Rules may only be altered, suspended, amended or replaced with a three-fourths vote of the CC present and voting. For purposes of this Rule, Committee People may vote by mail. Signed votes must be mailed to the EC Chair and received by noon the day before the meeting.