



# DELAWARE

## DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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### ENDORSEMENTS

Delaware's State Democratic Party Rules enable its committees to endorse Democratic candidates running for office in primaries. **Section 1.4 of the State Party Rules** outlines which Delaware Democratic Party committees have the authority to endorse in which races. The Party Rules break separate endorsement authority into three levels, Local, Subdivision, and Statewide.

#### Endorsement jurisdictions are as follows:

**Local State House Candidates** - Representative District(RD) Committee

**Local State Senate/County Legislature Candidates** - Special Caucus of resident committee members convened by Subdivision Chair

**Countywide/Citywide Candidates** - Subdivision Executive Committee

**Statewide Candidates** - State Executive Committee

#### Local level endorsement authority:

Rule 1.4 A - Authority to Endorse Candidates (Local)

*The **local (county, ward or city council, senate or representative) Committee shall have the sole right to endorse any local Democratic candidate or candidates within its district**, as authorized by the applicable subdivision. The local Committee may submit to the Subdivision Committee for review **recommendations for endorsement of a subdivision-wide Democratic candidate and recommendations for endorsement of a statewide Democratic candidate.***

This means that endorsement authority at the local/district level falls to the local/district committee. These committees are made up of committee members who reside in the district. Rep. District Committees have the sole authority to endorse candidates for State House. RD Committees may also **recommend** that candidates seeking higher offices be endorsed by the relevant committee.

#### Special meetings for non-State House endorsements:

For candidates running for State Senate or County Council/Levy Court, Rule 1.4 A still applies. Because the Delaware Democratic Party does not typically organize by Senate or County districts, **a special meeting must be called** to consider endorsements at this level. At the order of the Subdivision Chair, all District Committee members residing in the Senate/County Council/Levy Court district convene to consider an endorsement. This meeting should be planned in coordination with the State Party to ensure all eligible members are invited to participate and that the meeting is conducted in accordance with party rules.



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### Recommending Candidates for Endorsements:

While local district committees do not have the authority to endorse candidates outside of their jurisdiction they are authorized to recommend that these candidates be endorsed by the proper committee.

If members of the RD Committee also sit on the committee authorized to endorse they will often vote in accordance with the RD Committee's recommendation. **For example:** If an RD Committee recommends Countywide Candidate A for endorsement, the RD Committee's Chair would vote to endorse Countywide Candidate A at the County Executive Committee's endorsement meeting. While this is the advisable best practice, endorsement recommendations are nonbinding and committee representatives are not required to vote in accordance with recommendations.

Candidates that have been recommended for endorsement may not include the "Delaware Democratic Party" among their endorsements on literature and other campaign materials.

**Recommendations do NOT count as endorsements.** Any "endorsement" made by a committee without the authority to endorse in that race will be considered invalid by the State Party, will not be recognized, and will be counted as a recommendation.

### Endorsement Guidelines:

- Endorsements and recommendations to endorse may not take place without advance notice to committee members and the State Party.
  - This is to prevent endorsements or recommendations to endorse from being made in haste or when meeting attendance favors a particular candidate.
  - Best practice is to table unscheduled motions to endorse until the following meeting so that proper notice can be distributed.
  - Committees may also choose to preemptively set their endorsement meeting date in advance. Many choose the meeting following the filing deadline.
- Committee members must have been elected or appointed 30 days before voting on any endorsement or recommendation to endorse.
  - This rule is designed to prevent a candidate from packing their local committee with supporters immediately before a vote.
- Once endorsed by the relevant body a candidate may include the "Delaware Democratic Party" among their endorsements on literature and other campaign materials. Many committees will also support their endorsed/recommended candidates in additional ways such as:
  - Campaign contributions
  - Volunteering exclusively for the endorsed candidate
  - Providing in-kind contributions