

Metro DC DSA Bylaws

As amended effective January 1, 2018

1. **National Affiliation.** Metro DC Democratic Socialists of America (hereinafter “MDCDSA”) is a local chapter of the national organization Democratic Socialists of America.
2. **Members.** Any person who pays dues to Democratic Socialists of America and who lives in, works in, or is otherwise able to attend meetings in the jurisdiction of MDCDSA as defined by the national organization, is not a member of any other chapter of DSA, and who supports the mission and values of the chapter shall be a member of the chapter. Members are entitled to participate in any campaigns, committees, and groups organized within the MDCDSA, except as otherwise set forth herein. Furthermore, any member in good standing may hold an elected or appointed position within MDCDSA.
3. **Meetings of the Members.** Public meetings of the members shall be held on a regular basis, at least once a month, and at a regularly scheduled time and place, unless determined otherwise by the members. The meeting shall be run according to the adopted parliamentary authority and other procedures approved by the members. A meeting of the members shall be defined as a General Body Meeting or a Local Convention. The General Body Membership shall convene in a meeting of the members at least once a month. In the absence of a Local Convention, the members present and assembled at a General Body Meeting represent the General Body Membership and are the highest decision-making authority in the organization. The General Body Membership shall allow for the democratic introduction of proposals through a resolution process. Resolutions can be introduced by any member at a General Body Meeting.
4. **Parliamentary Authority.** The rules contained in the current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern MDCDSA in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order that MDCDSA may adopt. The parliamentary authority of MDCDSA shall be adopted by the Steering Committee and the General Body.
5. **Code of Conduct.** MDCDSA members are expected to conduct oneself with civility and respect towards all other members. Unacceptable member behavior includes: creating an intimidating, offensive, and/or abusive environment for other members; engaging in undemocratic or disruptive behavior; engaging in any actions detrimental to the purpose or values of the organization. If a member’s conduct is found to be in substantial disagreement with the principles or policies of the organization, they will be subject to disciplinary action that may include suspension and/or expulsion from MDCDSA, in accordance with MDCDSA bylaws and policy.

6. **Dues.** The members shall determine any Dues, which shall be separate from dues paid to national Democratic Socialists of America. All dues collected by the Chapter shall be retained by the Chapter.

7. **Steering Committee and Officers.**

a. *Steering Committee.*

- i. Members of MDCDSA, at an annual membership meeting, shall elect members of the Steering Committee by secret ballot. Members of MDCDSA, by an email (or postal) ballot, shall elect members of the Steering Committee by secret ballot. The current steering committee should select an interim body to prepare a proposal as to how this might be implemented by March 1.
- ii. The Steering Committee shall consist of Officers and at-large members. The officers shall consist of a Chair, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. The number of at-large members of the Steering Committee shall be determined by the general membership. The Secretary and the Treasurer shall be elected directly by the general body and shall be voting members of the Steering Committee. No person shall hold more than one office. Each officer and at-large Steering Committee member will serve a one-year term, the beginning and ending dates to be determined by the members. A majority of the duly appointed members of the Steering Committee shall constitute a quorum for conducting business. The Steering Committee shall meet person at least once a month at a time and place to be determined by the Steering Committee. In-person Steering Committee meetings shall be open to observation by any member of DSA in good standing, unless two-thirds of the committee votes to close the meeting.
- iii. The Steering Committee shall be authorized to meet by telephone conference or through other electronic communications media so long as all the members can simultaneously communicate with each other and participate fully during the meeting. The Steering Committee may conduct votes on matters via electronic means. Unless otherwise resolved by the general body membership, all communication required in these bylaws, including meeting notices, may be sent electronically. All minutes of the Steering Committee's meetings shall be posted on the chapter's website, including records of votes taken.

b. *Chair.* The Chair shall be the chief executive officer of MDCDSA, and shall ensure that all orders and resolutions of the members and the

Steering Committee are carried out. The Chair shall be elected by the Steering Committee from among their members. In the event of a vacancy, whether resulting from death, resignation or otherwise, the Steering Committee shall elect a new chair. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Steering Committee and shall sign or countersign all certificates, contracts or other instruments of MDCDSA except where otherwise designated in these bylaws. The Chair shall perform such other duties as are incident to the office required of them by the Steering Committee.

- c. *Treasurer.* The Treasurer shall, as directed by the Steering Committee, have care and custody of the general funds, securities, properties, and assets of the MDCDSA. The Treasurer shall ensure that the funds and securities shall be deposited in the bank(s), trust companies or depositories that the Steering Committee shall designate. At the direction of the Steering Committee, the Treasurer will ensure disbursement and disposal of the same, taking proper voucher for such disbursements. They shall ensure that accurate books of account are kept in accordance with commonly accepted accounting principles, recording therein the amount of all monies, funds, securities, properties and assets in his or her custody, wherever located, and showing the amount of disbursement made and the disposition of properties. They shall exhibit said books and records when required by the Steering Committee, Chair or Co-Chairs, or government agency of appropriate regulator jurisdiction pursuant to law. They shall prepare in consultation with the Steering Committee a one-year budget, to be presented and voted on at the General Body Meeting two months after the Steering Committee annual election. They shall prepare a yearly financial report for presentation at the December General Body Meeting.
- d. *Secretary.* The Secretary shall ensure that the minutes are kept of the meetings of the Steering Committee and of the general membership and shall ensure that the minutes are distributed. The Secretary shall see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws or as required by law. The Secretary shall be custodian of all MDCDSA records. The Secretary shall keep a register of the address, phone number and e-mail address of each member of the Steering Committee, which shall be furnished to the Secretary by each Steering Committee member. The Secretary shall, in general, perform the duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as are from time to time assigned by the Chair, or by the Steering Committee.
- e. *Vacancies.* All vacancies of Officers or members of the Steering Committee, whether resulting from death, resignation or otherwise, shall be filled through a special election by the general body.
- f. *Removal.*

- i. Any Officer or member of the Steering Committee may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Steering Committee. Any Officer or member of the Steering Committee may resign in writing. The Chair may resign without ceding their place on the Steering Committee.
 - ii. Any elected officer or member of the Steering Committee who misses three consecutive meetings or ten total meetings in a term without an acceptable reason shall be removed from the committee and their position declared vacant. Members of the Steering Committee may also be removed for malfeasance or gross incompetence.
 - iii. Members may petition for the removal an elected official by collecting signatures of either 100 members or 20% of the general body membership, the greater of the two, and having two-thirds of those present at a general body meeting vote in favor of removal. Members may petition for a snap election of any elected body by having two-thirds of those present at a general body meeting vote in favor of a snap election, to be held at the time and place of the general body's discretion. Any Officer or member of the Steering Committee may also resign in writing.
8. **Committees.** The number, duties, and functions of the committees, if any, shall be as determined by the members in accordance with these bylaws. Committee leaders shall actively encourage diversity in both committee and working group leadership and participation. This includes, but is not limited to, recognizing the contributions of women and members of underrepresented groups to the committee/working group and supporting them when considering leadership roles or general participation within the committee or working group.
 - a. *Administrative Committee.*
 - i. The Administrative Committee shall be a Standing Committee co-chaired by the Secretary and the Treasurer. Any member of the general body may be put forth by the co-chairs of the Administrative Committee to be vetted and approved by a majority vote of the Steering Committee or General body.
 - ii. The Administrative Committee shall be responsible for the following duties:
 1. maintaining a register of all binding and non-binding policies passed by a vote of the Steering Committee, a General Body Meeting, or a Local Convention;

2. maintaining a full list of all members of MDCDSA (Member List) as defined by the bylaws;
3. assisting in the function of and maintaining minutes of all general body and steering committee meetings of MDCDSA, in a fashion accessible to the general body membership;
4. facilitating communications between MDCDSA and parties external to MDCDSA, subject to the discretion of the Steering Committee and the General Body; and,
5. the Steering Committee or General Body may direct the Administrative Committee to assume more duties on their behalf.

b. *Internal Organizing Committee.*

- i. The Internal Organizing Committee (the “IOC”) will be a standing committee responsible for dealing with the recruitment, development, and mobilization of the chapter’s membership. This includes overseeing the member mobilization efforts, driving diversity efforts, and developing skills-based trainings available to all dues paying members.
- ii. The general body membership will elect two IOC officers to oversee the Committee. IOC officers will provide monthly reports on internal organizing to the Steering Committee, or upon request. Any dues paying members in good standing who have an interest in the internal health and function of MDCDSA are encouraged to join. The IOC will be responsible for proposing budgetary needs for internal organizing to the MDCDSA membership and/or appropriate bodies.
- iii. The IOC will develop the following:
 1. Membership recruitment and retention plans, which will be revised and updated if needed every six months
 2. Overseeing training and duties of Member Mobilizers, who will act as rank-and-file organizers within the chapter to ensure high participation, understanding, and respect among MDCDSA members
 3. Oversee new member onboarding, to ensure new members know the internal structure of MDCDSA, what resources are available to them, and who to reach out to for those resources

4. Oversee MDCDSA training programs to train members in grassroots organizing and campaigning
 5. Be a resource for working groups and committees for when they plan events and direct actions
 6. Additionally, the IOC will encourage members to develop their own internal initiatives related to membership, training, and internal culture. Implementation of these membership-driven projects will be assisted by the IOC.
- iv. To carry out these responsibilities, functional Working Groups dealing with outreach, education, or mobilization of members will be developed within the IOC, under the oversight of the IOC Officers.

c. *Finance Committee.*

- i. The Treasurer (see “Officers”) will oversee the Finance Committee, which shall be responsible for the budget and financial organization of the chapter, including overseeing fundraising activities for the chapter, and compliance with any financial regulations the chapter is subject to. In addition, the Finance Committee shall maintain transparent and open financial reports, available to the entire membership upon request. Any MDCDSA member in good standing may participate in the Finance Committee.
- ii. At the end of each fiscal year, the Finance Committee shall present a report and analysis to the Steering Committee of expenditures and revenues, including a brief forecast for the upcoming fiscal year.
- iii. The Treasurer shall also be charged with developing a participatory budgeting training no later than December 31, 2017. The Finance Committee shall sponsor a “Participatory Budgeting Training” at least four times a year quarterly.
- iv. Under the direction of the Chair of the Steering Committee, the Treasurer shall set aside one-third of the organization’s budget on January 1, 2018 (in accordance with the organization’s fiscal year) for a pilot participatory budget process to be implemented no later than March 1, 2018. Additionally, the Finance Committee shall make a recommendation for maintaining or expanding the percentage set aside, and develop a bylaw amendment on a finalized participatory budgeting process at the next Local Convention of the MDCDSA.

9. **Working Groups.** Committees called Working Groups shall be formed whenever five dues paying MDCDSA members come together around a shared vision of work, as long as its mission and activities do not violate our bylaws. Working groups may be issue or campaign-based, and shall be responsible for keeping the Steering Committee and the membership informed of the working groups' projects. If the Steering Committee finds the activities of a Working Group violates the mission and/or bylaws of the chapter, they shall have the authority to halt its activities until it can be approved at the next general body meeting. Any working group may be dissolved by a majority of its members, when it fails to have five active dues paying members, been inactive for more than one year, or at a general body meeting by a vote of two-thirds of the members present.
10. **Caucuses.** Members may self-organize into temporary or permanent caucuses according to shared interests, affinities, and/or political goals.
- a. *Definitions.* All members shall have the right to form a caucus. Caucuses are independent formations of members within the Chapter established on the basis of shared interests, affinities, and/or political goals. The objectives of a caucus may include - but are not limited to - advocating for the election of its members to leading bodies, for specific campaigns or initiatives for the GBM to take up, or for a redress of grievances. Caucuses shall have the right to determine their own membership.
 - b. *Formal Recognition.* A caucus may choose whether or not they would like formal recognition. To gain formal status, a caucus shall submit a mission statement that includes the name and purpose of the caucus, as well as any restrictions on eligibility for membership in the Caucus, signed by no less than five members in good standing. The Secretary will be responsible for confirming the membership status of all signatories, and notifying the Steering Committee of recognition.
 - c. *Access to Communications for Recognized Caucuses.* Formal recognition guarantees that the caucus shall be listed on the Metro DC DSA website, along with their name, vision statement, and a point of contact. Recognized caucuses shall have the right to publish statements and proposals in public forums for the Local, subject to the moderation of the moderation team of that forum.
 - d. *Structure and Relationships with Other Caucuses.* The right for a caucus of the Local to establish formal or informal relationships with other caucuses composed of DSA Local or National members shall not be infringed or regulated by the Steering Committee. Caucuses shall have the right to determine their own internal structure, except where it is in violation of any bylaws or policies regarding member conduct.

11. **Auditors.**

- a. The Auditors Working Group (the "Auditors") shall consist of three (3) MDCDSA members. Each member must have a minimum tenure of one (1)

year in Metro DC DSA. Members shall be appointed by majority vote by the Steering Committee, no later than 1 week before the Audit Period. Members shall be appointed for a term of 6 months. Members shall not serve more than 2 consecutive terms.

- b. The Auditors shall conduct the Comprehensive Chapter Audit (the “CCA”) and deliver the results of the CCA to the Steering Committee and the chapter at large within two (2) weeks of the scheduled audit date.
- c. The CCA shall be conducted three times a year, between 120 and 130 calendar days after the last scheduled audit. The two weeks preceding the scheduled audit date shall be considered the Audit Period. The CCA shall be prepared using a template approved by the Steering Committee, and shall consist of two sections:
 - i. Chapter Health Summary, which provides raw data on the following areas and is delivered directly to the general body within two weeks of the scheduled audit date:
 1. Chapter membership, including current membership numbers, membership increase or decrease trends, “engagement” rates using several metrics such as meeting and event attendance
 2. Chapter financials, including current financial status, estimated monthly expenditures, forecasted near-term expenditures, estimated recurring revenue, and a full reconciliation of MDCDSA’s bookkeeping records since the last conducted audit
 - ii. Chapter Analysis, which requires the Auditors to collect, consolidate, and assess feedback from the general body and present a summary of their concerns, suggestions, and overall opinion of the chapter. The Auditors will also conduct an evaluation of the chapter’s internal systems and practices, such as internal communications, committee activities, and security culture and practices. The Chapter Analysis will be delivered to the Steering Committee, who will then deliver the results to the chapter at large within one (1) week of their receipt.
 - iii. The Steering Committee may withhold the Chapter Analysis from general distribution only if there is evidence that the audit was performed improperly or the results have been intentionally misrepresented
 - iv. During the Audit Period, the Auditors shall be granted full access to all aspects of Metro DC DSA, including the chapter membership list, bank accounts, bookkeeping records, and

other sensitive information. Access to this information must be provided under the supervision of each respective responsible party, and must be promptly revoked at the end of each audit period.

12. **Electoral Endorsements.** The General Body shall be empowered to officially endorse electoral candidates on behalf of MDCDSA by a two-thirds vote at a general body meeting. Members of the chapter shall not be empowered to campaign as representatives of MDCDSA or its formations on behalf of any candidate, except that such candidate has been endorsed by MDCDSA or DSA National.
13. **Fiscal Year.** The Fiscal Year shall commence the first day of January in each year.
14. **Changes to the Bylaws.** Members shall have the power to approve changes to the Bylaws. Any proposed changes to the Bylaws shall be announced to the members one meeting in advance of any vote. Changes may be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the members present. In order to amend the bylaws of MDCDSA in the absence of a Local Convention, language must be introduced at the monthly meeting of the members prior to the monthly meeting at which members will vote on the amendment in question. The meeting at which the bylaws amendment is considered must have a quorum of 100 members.
15. **Local Convention.**
 - a. The Metro DC chapter of DSA (“MDCDSA”) shall hold a Local Convention for the purpose of considering amendments to the chapter bylaws and other resolutions every other year, on alternating years from the national convention of the Democratic Socialists of America.
 - b. To be eligible to vote as a delegate in the MDCDSA Local Convention, individuals shall be members of MDCDSA in good standing as of 30 days prior to the date on which the convention is to be held, and remain such through the date of the convention. All processes for voting, introducing resolutions, and other administrative affairs pertinent to a Local Convention not specified in these bylaws shall be governed by the Convention Rules approved for that Convention.
 - c. All Resolutions and Bylaws Amendments passed at the Local Convention shall become binding requirements on MDCDSA as of 90 days following the date of the Local Convention. This language is not intended to preclude earlier implementation of these Amendments and Resolutions.
16. **Branches.** A branch is a group of members in a locality who organize to perform work in their community.
 - a. *Exploratory Committee.* An exploratory committee for establishment of a branch may be commissioned upon a majority vote of the Steering Committee, consisting of such members as the Steering Committee shall appoint at its discretion.
 - b. *Establishment.* An exploratory committee desiring to form a branch shall draft a charter and elect proposed officers in accordance therewith. The

branch shall be established upon ratification of the charter and initial officers by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting at a meeting of the members of the MDCDSA, at which point the exploratory committee will be deemed dissolved.

- c. *Charter and Powers.* The charter of a branch shall set forth, at a minimum: the powers delegated to the branch, a defined geographic territory, a list of officers and their responsibilities, and procedures for the election and removal of officers. A charter of a branch may be amended either by a two-thirds vote of members present at a meeting of the members of the MDCDSA or, alternatively, by application of the branch subject to ratification by a three-fifths vote of the Steering Committee. Neither the branch nor any officer thereof shall have the power to enter into contracts, make expenditures, or assume financial obligations on behalf of the branch or the MDCDSA except as specifically authorized in accordance with the Bylaws.
- d. *Membership.* Any member of MDCDSA shall be eligible to be a member of a branch if they live or work within that branch's territory. No member of MDCDSA shall be a member of more than one branch at any time.
- e. *Accountability.* A meeting of the members of the MDCDSA may, on a two-thirds vote of members present and voting, dissolve a branch, dismiss an officer of a branch, or dissolve an exploratory committee.
- f. *Branch Funds.* If a Chartered Branch conducts a fundraiser for a particular purpose, they shall deposit these funds in the Chapter accounts as directed by the treasurer. The treasurer shall keep a ledger of Chartered Branch deposits and those deposits shall only be disbursed with the consent of the Chartered Branch leadership.

17. Electronic Meetings and Communications.

- a. *Meetings.* The Steering Committee and all committees, councils, boards, branches, working groups, and caucuses shall be authorized to meet by telephone conference or through other electronic communications media so long as all the members can simultaneously hear each other and participate during the meeting.
- b. *Communication.* Unless members indicate otherwise to the Steering Committee, all communication required in these bylaws, including meeting notices, may be sent electronically.

18. Dissolution. MDCDSA may be dissolved by motion approved by three-fifths of the Steering Committee, which is then approved by a 2/3 vote of the general membership. Any vote at the steering committee regarding dissolution must have all members of the steering committee present, and the vote total of the membership must represent at least 50% of the current members of MDCDSA. The Steering Committee shall ensure that an appropriate agent is designated to complete the dissolution of the organization. Said agent shall ensure that all financial and legal issues are properly resolved.