



# Maine Democratic Socialists of America Chapter Bylaws

*Last Updated and Ratified on 2022-01-23*

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## Bylaws of the Maine Democratic Socialists of America

### Article I. Name

The name of the Chapter shall be the Maine Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA).

### Article II. Object

The object of the Chapter is to facilitate the transition of Society to a democratic socialist one in which the means and resources of production are democratically and socially controlled to provide a fair political and economic system in which the class system is abolished to allow all people to thrive.

### Article III. Members

Section 1. Membership. Members of the Chapter will be those individuals whose dues to the National DSA are paid in full and who reside or work in Maine.

Section 2. Dues. Dues are set by the National DSA and must be paid to the National DSA office. Voluntary member dues may be established on behalf of Maine DSA, but their nonpayment may not restrict membership status or eligibility to serve on any committees or working groups.

Section 3. "Good Standing". Members are considered in "good standing" provided that they are considered in good standing with the National DSA.

Section 4. Maine DSA Member Expectations. There is an expectation for all members to participate in creating a safe and open space, so that our chapter can assert our priorities. In doing this there is an expectation that all members follow the [code of conduct](#) and are respectful to all other members and potential members, in all spaces, including: in person, slack, discord, the forum, signal and email. In addition, in order for the chapter to effectively run there is an expectation that membership will participate in supporting the infrastructure and/or priorities.

Section 5. Suspension and Expulsion. The Steering Committee may expel a member by unanimous vote or suspend a member by majority vote provided

- A. the member is found to be in substantial disagreement with the principles or policies of the organization;
- B. violation of the aforementioned code of conduct
- C. they publicly misrepresent the formal endorsements or positions adopted by the Chapter;

Members facing expulsion or suspension must receive written notice of the charges against

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them and must be given a reasonable opportunity to provide a written response to the Steering Committee (which must be in addition to any opportunity they may have to provide a written response to the Grievance Officers) prior to the aforementioned vote. After charges to suspend or expel a member are disposed of or dismissed, the Steering Committee shall report those charges and the results of the process to the membership as soon as reasonably possible. Reports shall be made in summary form to protect the privacy and identities of the involved individual(s), and shall identify how Steering Committee members voted and which were recused.

Any member of the Steering Committee who cannot reasonably be expected to fairly adjudicate an investigation, grievance, or disciplinary process (such as if they are the complainant or if their own behavior is at issue) shall automatically be recused. All voting thresholds shall be based on the number of non-recused Steering Committee members.

Section 6. Harassment Policy. The local chapter will follow the local [Harassment & Grievance Policy](#)

Section 7. Resignation of Members. Members may resign at any time.

Section 8. Reinstatement of Members. Removed or Resigned Members may be reinstated by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Chapter.

### Article IV. Chapter Meetings

Public meetings of the chapter shall be held on a regular basis at a regularly scheduled time and place. Meetings of the chapter include general meetings, emergency meetings, and biannual meetings, where the chapter may vote on official chapter business.

Section 1. General Membership Meetings. The general membership meetings of the Chapter shall be held on the second Sunday of the month. The Chapter may vote to change this date. Written notice of a change of date shall be sent to the Chapter at least seven (7) days in advance.

Section 2. Winter Semi-Annual Membership Meeting. The general membership meeting held in January shall be known as the Winter Semi-Annual. The business of the Winter Semi-Annual will include:

- A. Elections of Winter Chairs of Steering Committee
- B. Approval of a year long budget

Section 3. Summer Semi-Annual Membership Meeting. The general membership meeting held in July shall be known as the Summer Semi-Annual. The business of the Summer Semi-Annual will include:

- A. Elections of Summer Chairs of Steering Committee

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Section 4. Emergency Membership Meetings. Emergency membership meetings shall be called either by the Steering Committee or by petition of at least ten (10) members. Notice of an emergency meeting shall include the specific items of business to be considered. Only items stated in the notice may be considered.

### Section 5. Non-Voting General Meetings.

- A. The Steering Committee may set chapter-wide non-voting meetings at which voting business will not be conducted and policies will not be set. Chapter business and policies may be discussed and debated.
- B. Non-voting meetings may be organized by another committee, working group, or chapter member with the endorsement of five (5) other chapter members, so long as the organizer(s) coordinate with the Steering Committee to:
  - a. Confirm the availability of a month not already slated for a general meeting;
  - b. Identify the meeting's goal(s), facilitator(s), and agenda or other structure.
- C. The Steering Committee shall provide notice of the meeting.

Section 5. Notice of Membership Meetings. Members shall be sent written notice at least seven (7) days before all meetings.

Section 6. Meetings Required. The chapter shall hold at least six voting general meetings a year. The chapter shall hold either a voting general meeting or non-voting general meeting each month, except the month immediately following the month of a Semi-Annual meeting. The Steering Committee shall propose a meeting schedule for the duration of their term within fourteen (14) days of election.

### Section 7. Accessibility & Remote Participation.

- A. All Membership and SC meetings shall, when possible, be held in places that conform to the Americans with Disability Act priority 1 standards for accessibility.
- B. The Chapter may provide for remote participation in meetings. Participants shall be able to communicate in real time. Remote participation shall count as presence at a meeting.

Section 8. Quorum. A quorum shall consist of seven (7) members.

## Article V. Steering Committee

### Section 1. Membership

- A. The leadership body for the chapter shall be called the Steering Committee (SC).
- B. Voting members shall consist of four (4) Winter Co-Chairs, and four (4) Summer Co-Chairs for four working groups:
  1. Agenda
  2. Communications
  3. Finance
  4. Membership
- C. Voting at-large seats may be created to fulfill Diversity Requirements

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- D. Non-voting members shall consist of the chairs of any standing committee.

### Section 2. Duties and Powers

- A. The SC shall be responsible for acting on the organization's behalf between chapter meetings.
- B. The SC is subordinate to the bylaws, as well as resolutions passed by members at chapter meetings. The SC is not permitted to overturn decisions of the chapter membership unless required by law.
- C. The SC shall settle recommendations from the Harassment and Grievance Officers.
- D. The SC will propose a budget at the Winter Semi-Annual Meeting.
- E. The SC may make recommendations to the chapter.

### Section 3. Diversity Requirements.

- A. The makeup of the Steering Committee shall consist of:
  - 1. At least three non-cisgender-men.
  - 2. At least one minority with respect to race, sexual orientation, and/or country of origin.
- B. *Fulfilling requirements.* During the calculation of results for *any* election of Steering Committee Members, the Election Committee will **repeat the following process as necessary** (i.e. it may be necessary to do this more than once):
  - 1. The Election Committee will analyze the potential makeup of the Steering Committee as it will exist after the election.
  - 2. If it is determined that the diversity requirements will not be met by the SC voting members after the election and the electorate has willing members available who, if added, would allow them to meet the requirement:
    - a. The Election Committee will inform the existing Steering Committee of its determination that the diversity requirements have not been met.
    - b. An additional temporary Steering Committee position will be created, its term to expire at the next Semi-Annual meeting and be *eliminated* at said expiration.
    - c. The Election Committee will hold an immediate single-winner special election for this newly-created position with the candidate pool restricted to only those candidates who would help to fulfill the unfulfilled diversity requirements.

### Section 4. At-Large Role and Responsibility

- A. Participate in deliberation and voting of the Steering Committee
- B. Choose one SC Working Group to support.
- C. At-large seats may change which SC Working Group they support during their term.

### Section 5. Resignation, Recall, and Vacancies

- A. Members of the SC may resign by written notice. Resignation shall be instant unless the notice sets some other date. Notice to membership should be sent within seven (7) days.
- B. Co-Chairs may be recalled by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Chapter. The Chapter must be sent notice of a recall vote at least thirty days in advance.

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- C. Vacancies shall be filled by electronic vote 30 days after notice is delivered to the membership, following the rules of Article VI.

### Section 6. Staggered Terms.

- A. Winter Co-Chairs terms of office start in January.
- B. Summer Co-Chairs terms of office start in July.

### Section 6. Meetings

- A. The SC shall meet at least once a month.
- B. Additional meetings may be called by petition of at least three (3) voting members.
- C. Members shall receive three (3) days notice of all SC meetings.
- D. Meetings and votes of the SC may be held remotely.
- E. A quorum shall consist of four (4) voting members.

## Article VI. Steering Committee Working Groups

### Section 1. Membership

- A. SC Working Groups shall be coordinated by their two (2) Co-Chairs.
- B. SC Working Groups shall be open to active members.

### Section 2. Finance Working Group

- A. The Working Group may sign checks and drafts on behalf of the Chapter.
- B. The Working Group will craft the budget described in Article V. Section 2 part D
- C. The Working Group shall keep the Chapter's financial records.
- D. The Working Group shall make financial reports at all Chapter meetings.
- E. The Working Group shall handle merchandise sales and distribution.

### Section 3. Membership Working Group

- A. The Working Group shall request membership lists from National DSA at least monthly.
- B. The Working Group shall work on membership mobilization, engagement, and development.
- C. The Working Group shall be responsible for event data.

### Section 4. Agenda Working Group

- A. The Working Group shall lead all membership and SC meetings.
- B. The Working Group shall create the agendas for membership and SC meetings.
- C. The Working Group shall fix the time and location of membership and SC meetings.
- D. The Working Group may change the date of membership and SC meetings as needed.

### Section 5. Communications Working Group

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- A. The Working Group shall be the Chapter's external spokespersons.
- B. The Working Group shall record the minutes of all membership and SC meetings.
- C. The Working Group shall keep the Chapter's non-financial records.

### Article VII. Nominations & Elections

Section 1. Applicability. This article applies to all elections for Steering Committee, delegates to conventions, and any other election where there is at least a one (1) month notice.

Section 2. Nominations.

- A. Eligibility shall be limited to members.
- B. Nominations may be made by any member.
- C. Members may nominate themselves.
- D. Members may be nominated for multiple offices.
- E. Nominations shall close at least ten (10) days prior to election.

Section 3. Election Committee. For each and every election, a three-person ad-hoc Election Committee shall be appointed at least one week prior to the applicable election by the SC. The Election Committee shall include exactly one member of the Steering Committee and two other members in good standing. The purpose of the Election Committee is to administer the election by preparing the ballots, coordinating with absentee voters, and calculating the election's outcome.

Section 4. Elections.

- A. Elections shall be by majority vote unless some other method is approved by members.
- B. Contested Elections shall be determined by ballot.
- C. Uncontested Elections shall be determined by hand vote to seat all candidates at once.

Section 5. Terms of Office.

- A. Members may only hold one office at a time.
- B. Members shall assume office immediately upon election.
- C. Elected members may not be serving as elected public officials.
- D. Elected members who decide to run for elected public office must resign from their leadership positions.

### Article VIII. Committees

Section 1. Definition.

- A. *Committees.* Committees, or Standing Committees, are a subgroup of the Chapter meant to provide accountable deliberation on an issue of central importance to the chapter. The issue should be set at formation. They produce proposals to be voted on by the chapter and then carried out by the committee. Deliberations should be routine and expected to justify frequent elections.

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- B. *Focus*. A focus is a type of proposal that Committees present to the chapter. The specificity of these proposals is left up to the committees, but they should provide at least the subject matter the committee will be focusing on for their term.

### Section 2. Formation.

- A. Committees may be formed by motion at any membership meeting.
- B. Motions shall define a mission statement.
- C. Motions require endorsement from at least ten (10) DSA members in good standing for approval.

### Section 3. Membership

- A. Committees shall consist of three (3) members.
- B. Committee members will be elected by the general membership to terms of six (6) months at the Chapter Meeting in January and July.
- C. Committee members may resign at any time.
- D. Vacancies shall be filled by electronic vote 30 days after notice is delivered to the membership, following the rules of Article VI for the remainder of the six (6) month term.
- E. Committees may appoint other chapter members as non-voting committee members to assist in fulfilling its duties or complete the necessary work of the committee. This must be reported to the general membership.
- F. Committees may also create sub-committees which are open to all chapter members.

### Section 4. Meetings

- A. Committees must meet at least once per month.
- B. Meetings shall be confirmed by minutes or quarterly reports.
- C. While Committee meetings are themselves closed, they must hold at least one (1) public-facing meeting per quarter.

### Section 5. Requirements

- A. Committees will report to the Steering Committee once every 30 days, and every membership meeting.
- B. Committees will submit a focus for their term at the first General Membership Meeting after elections, to be approved by the general membership.
- C. Committees are free to implement focus as they see fit.

### Section 6. Dissolution

- A. Committees may be dissolved if they fail to meet the requirements of this Article.
- B. Committees may be dissolved at any time by a majority vote of the general membership.



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### Section 7. Standing Committees

- A. *Political Education Committee*. Responsible for organizing educational events for the chapter, and carrying out the focus approved by the chapter.

## Article IX. Campaign Committees

### Section 1. Definition.

- A. *Campaign Committees*. Campaign Committees are a special type of Committee used for researching, proposing, and conducting chapter campaigns. Voting membership of committees is set at formation, and is closed to additional members. They can be either Chapter-wide or focused in a particular local area.
- B. *Chapter Campaigns*. Chapter Campaigns are priority campaigns approved by the general membership that require a major mustering of chapter resources. These campaigns may be electoral ballot questions, or candidates, but are not required to be. They may be external or internal campaigns. Chapter Campaigns are expected to have a timeline of 6 months to a year.

### Section 2. Formation

- A. The Chapter-wide Campaign Committee will be formed in July of 2023 and have its first election in the membership meeting in July.
- B. Local Campaign Committees may be formed by motion at the annual membership meeting in January, or any special membership meeting called for that purpose.
- C. Motions shall define a mission statement and a description of the constituency the committee will be organizing.
- D. Motions shall require endorsement from at least twenty (20) DSA members who are a part of the proposed constituency in good standing for approval.
- E. There shall only be one (1) Chapter Campaign Committee at any given time.
- F. There shall only be one (1) local Campaign Committee at any given time within an area.

### Section 3. Membership

- A. Committees shall consist of five (5) DSA members in good standing.
- B. Committee members will be elected by the general membership for terms of one (1) year.
- C. Elections for Chapter-wide Campaign Committee membership will happen at the membership meeting in July and Local Campaign Committee membership will happen at the membership meeting in January.
- D. Chairs of Campaign Committees will be selected by its voting members.
- E. Committee members may resign at any time.

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- F. Vacancies shall be filled by electronic vote 30 days after notice is delivered to the membership, following the rules of Article VI for the remainder of the one (1) year term.
- G. Committees may appoint other chapter members as non-voting committee members to assist in fulfilling its duties or complete the necessary work of the committee. This must be reported to the general membership.
- H. Committees may also create sub-committees which are open to all chapter members.

### Section 4. Meetings

- A. Committees must meet at least once per month.
- B. Meetings shall be confirmed by minutes or quarterly reports.
- C. While Committee meetings are themselves closed, they must hold at least one (1) public-facing meeting per quarter.

### Section 5. Requirements

- A. Committees will report to the Steering Committee once every 30 days, and every membership meeting.
- B. Campaign Committees may petition for a change on their proposal deadline with approval by the Steering Committee.
- C. The Chapter-wide Campaign Committee will propose a priority campaign for general membership approval at a membership meeting in January, July, or an emergency meeting called for that purpose if granted a change on their deadline.
- D. Local Campaign Committees will propose their priority campaigns for general membership approval at the membership meeting in July, January, or an emergency meeting called for that purpose if granted a change on their deadline.
- E. Committees may petition for an extension of no more than four (4) months, to be approved by the Steering Committee. This will not delay elections for new Campaign Committees.
- F. Campaigns may last longer than a year, but must be reaffirmed by the general membership.
- G. Local Campaign Committees must send a representative to the statewide Campaign Committee.
- H. Local Campaign Committees must work to synergize their campaign with the statewide Campaign Committee.

### Section 6. Dissolution

- A. Committees may be dissolved if they fail to meet the requirements of this Article.
- B. Committees may be dissolved at any time by a majority vote of the general membership.

## Article X. Working Groups

Section 1. Definition. Working Groups are subgroups of the Chapter focused on a specific task, which is defined at formation and given a set timespan. They are open to all members in good standing.

### Section 2. Formation.

- A. Working Groups may be formed by submitting a petition to the Steering Committee.
- B. Petitions will include a charter for the working group, which will include:
  - i. Name of group
  - ii. Mission statement and objectives
  - iii. Strategy for achieving stated objectives, and what support will be needed from the Steering Committee Working Groups.
  - iv. Expected timeline for completing tasks. Timelines may not be longer than one (1) year.
  - v. Name of Working Group Coordinators.
  - vi. Endorsement from at least five (5) DSA members in good standing. Endorsers should plan on participating in the working group.
- C. Working Groups are approved by majority vote of the Steering Committee.
- D. The Steering Committee may amend the charter, including the name of the Working Group Coordinators.
- E. Regardless of whether the working group petition succeeds or fails, within seven (7) days of the Steering Committee vote, a report will be sent to membership explaining the vote.

### Section 3. Working Group Coordinator.

- A. Working groups need at least two (2) coordinators
- B. Coordinators are responsible for working with the Steering Committee Working Groups, and ensuring that requirements are met.
- C. Working Group Coordinators may resign at any time.
- D. Vacancies will be filled by appointment by the Steering Committee
- E. Working Groups may alternatively define their own internal structure, per the approval of the Steering Committee.

### Section 4. Meetings.

- A. Working Groups shall meet at least once per month.
- B. Meetings shall be confirmed by minutes or quarterly reports.

### Section 5. Activity Requirements and Review.

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- A. Working Groups must send at least one (1) representative to the Steering Committee Working Groups named in the charter at least one (1) meeting per month.
- B. Working Group's charter will be reviewed by the Steering Committee either at the end of their timeline or the next Annual Meeting whichever happens at a later date.
- C. The Steering Committee will make a recommendation on continuing or ending the charter that will then be approved at a general membership meeting.
- D. Working Groups that fail to meet the requirements of this Article will be dissolved.

### Article XI. Parliamentary Authority

The current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the Chapter where these Bylaws or any standing rules of the Chapter do not apply.

### Article XII. Restrictions

Section 1. Nonprofit Status. The Chapter shall not engage in any activity prohibited by the IRS guidelines for 501(c)(4) organizations or similar rules established by the state of Maine.

Section 2. DSA National. The Chapter shall not engage in any activity prohibited by resolutions adopted by DSA's National Convention or DSA's National Political Committee.

### Article XIII. Amendments

Members may submit amendments to these Bylaws in writing at any membership meeting. Amendments require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Chapter at either the next membership meeting or at a meeting defined by the submitting members.