



Organizational By-laws

ARTICLE 1 – NAME

The name of this organization shall be DC for Democracy.

ARTICLE 2 – PURPOSE

DC for Democracy is a grassroots organization located in the nation's capital that works at the national and local levels to promote political empowerment, integrity in leadership, and transparency in government. To this end, DC for Democracy will bring new people into the political process, support progressive issues and candidates, and advocate full citizenship rights through statehood for the District of Columbia.

- Section 1.** To promote good government and the participation of citizens in government at the federal, state and local level.
- Section 2.** To provide an opportunity for interested persons to participate in the democratic process.
- Section 3.** To commit DC for Democracy and its members to the principles of equal opportunity irrespective of race, religion, ethnic background, disability, national origin, age and/or sex.
- Section 4.** To work towards providing the highest degree of justice, social welfare and opportunity for everyone.
- Section 5.** To adopt positions and act on international, national, state and local issues.
- Section 6.** To stimulate interest and participation in registration and voting.
- Section 7.** To endorse candidates, issues, referendum and ballot initiatives of our choice, and take supportive action.
- Section 8.** To support other objectives and principles approved by DC for Democracy.

ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1.** Membership in DC for Democracy is open to all individuals that affirm the mission and objectives listed in Article 2.

- Section 2.** Membership will not be limited based on an individual's political party affiliation, or residency.
- Section 3.** Voting membership is offered to all members.
- Section 4.** An individual joins DC for Democracy by registering on the DC for Democracy website – www.DCforDemocracy.org – or by joining at a DC for Democracy meeting.

ARTICLE 4 - VOTING

Section 1. Each member shall be entitled to one vote in all proceedings of DC for Democracy.

Section 2. A new member is eligible to vote in DC for Democracy proceedings 30 days after joining the organization as described in Article 3, Section 4.

Section 3. In an endorsement ballot, absentee ballots are permitted only if all of the following conditions are met:

The member requesting an absentee ballot must be a member for a minimum of 30 days prior to the request of the ballot;

A minimum of one week's notification prior to the date of the endorsement meeting is given to request an absentee ballot from the Chair.

Absentee ballots will be provided to those members requesting one and who meet the above two criteria. Completed ballots must be returned to the Chair no later than one day before the endorsement meeting.

Section 4. The Steering Committee shall create endorsement criteria and an application process for all candidates interested in receiving the endorsement of DC for Democracy.

The Steering Committee shall specify in the Endorsement Criteria the election or other purpose of the endorsement vote, the date the endorsement vote will be held, and which candidates are included in the endorsement options. These decisions, like other Steering Committee actions, may be overruled by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting.

Section 5. The endorsement of, or opposition to, any candidate or candidates, or to any national, regional, state, or DC issues shall require the affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of members voting (present and absentee). If a two-thirds majority is not obtained, no endorsement will be made.

If there are only one or two endorsement options (candidates, initiative answers, etc.), each voter may cast one vote for a candidate (or for "No Endorsement") and the votes are totaled to see if any candidate reaches two-thirds.

If there are more than two endorsement options, a modified instant-runoff vote is used to give voters the option of expressing support for more than one option. This will generally happen only for candidates, since other endorsements will be yes or no votes. Each voter may cast one vote for a candidate (or for "No Endorsement") and then, if desired, cast a second-choice vote to be used if the preferred candidate is eliminated during the counting. Voters should not cast any votes for a candidate they would not be willing to endorse. Votes are counted as follows:

1. First-choice votes are totaled.
2. If one candidate reaches two-thirds, the endorsement is made and the process is complete.
3. If no candidate has reached two-thirds and two or more candidates remain, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and those votes are transferred to the second-choice candidates marked on those ballots, if there are any. Ballots with no second-choice candidate, and ballots whose second-choice candidate has already been eliminated, are assigned to "No Endorsement" (a special "candidate" that is never eliminated). Go back to step (2).
4. If only one candidate and "No Endorsement" remain, and the candidate has not reached two-thirds, then no endorsement is made and the process is complete.

Resolving ties: If a candidate must be eliminated during counting and candidates are tied for the fewest votes, then the candidate among them with the fewest votes in the previous round of voting is eliminated (and the round before that can be used as a further tiebreaker if necessary, and so on). If the candidates are tied in all earlier rounds as well, then all of them are eliminated.

After an endorsement has been made, a two-thirds vote of the members present at a meeting may call for a new endorsement vote if (1) a new candidate appears who might better fit the endorsement criteria than the endorsed candidate or (2) the endorsed candidate withdraws from the election or demonstrates that he or she does not fit the endorsement criteria.

Section 6. There shall be twenty-one days written notice for any meeting held for the purpose of endorsing any candidate or candidates for elective office, and/or issues.

Section 7. At all meetings, except for the election of officers and endorsements, all votes shall be by voice. For election of officers, ballots shall be provided and there shall not appear any place on such ballot that might tend to indicate the person who cast such ballot.

At all votes by ballot, the Chair of such meeting shall, prior to the commencement of balloting, appoint a committee of three who shall act as "Inspectors of Election" and who shall:

1. establish a written "Rules of the Day" to be provided to the membership for approval prior to balloting beginning, and
2. at the conclusion of such balloting, certify in writing to the Chair the results and the certified copy shall be physically affixed in the minute book to the minutes of that meeting.

No inspector of election shall be a candidate for office or shall have a direct or material interest in the vote.

ARTICLE 5 – MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Section 1. General membership meetings shall be held no less than quarterly (one per three months), upon notice in writing giving the hour and place of meeting to each member of DC for Democracy at least fourteen days before the date of the meeting. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Chair, provided notice in writing is given, giving the hour and place of the meeting, to each member of DC for Democracy at least seven days before the date of the meeting. Notice sent by email to the membership shall constitute writing for this purpose.

Section 2. Special meetings of DC for Democracy may be called by the Chair, by the majority of the Steering Committee, or by petition of thirty-three percent (33%) of the members of DC for Democracy, provided a notice stating the time and place of such meeting is given in writing to each member of DC for Democracy at least 72 hours before the appointed time.

Section 3. A majority of the Steering Committee members and twenty (20) members eligible to vote, must be present at regular and special meetings to constitute a quorum and shall be required to conduct any DC for Democracy business.

Section 4. Minutes will be created for each Steering Committee, Committee, General Membership, and Special meetings. Meeting minutes will be made public to all members.

ARTICLE 6 – STEERING COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Steering Committee shall be composed of:

- Chair
- Treasurer
- Assistant Treasurer
- Secretary
- Ombudsman
- Political Director
- Fundraising Chair
- Membership Outreach Chair
- Events Chair
- Website/Information Technology Chair
- Communications Chair
- Two (2) At-large members

Section 2. The Chair, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary and Ombudsman shall be elected by a vote of the general membership, in accordance with Article 7. The Political Director, Fundraising Chair, Membership Outreach Chair, Events Chair, Website/Information Technology Chair, Communications Chair and two (2) at-large members shall be appointed by the Chair, and approved by majority vote of the elected officers. The two (2) at-large member positions are to be used to increase diversity and representation of the Steering Committee.

Section 3. The functions of the Steering Committee shall be to conduct business between meetings; to take action on behalf of DC for Democracy in accordance with the stated purposes of the organization on legislative matters that arise between membership meetings and require immediate action; to provide communications between committees and officers; and to provide liaisons between DC for Democracy and other groups.

Section 4. The Steering Committee shall meet at least ten times per year in ten different months. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair or by a majority of the Committee, provided notice is given at least seventy-two hours in advance to each member. When possible, a telephone conference call will be set up for steering committee members unable to attend in person.

Section 5. No action shall be taken by the Steering Committee unless a majority of its members are present.

Section 6. Meetings of the Steering Committee shall be open to all DC for Democracy members.

Section 7. Action by the Steering Committee shall be reported no later than the next general membership meeting. The membership shall have the right to overrule, on a two-thirds (67%) vote of a majority present, any action taken by the Steering Committee.

Section 8. Any member of the Steering Committee may resign by filing a written resignation with the Secretary.

ARTICLE 7 – OFFICER ELECTIONS

Section 1. Any eligible member may seek to have their name placed on the ballot by collecting the signatures of ten (10) members on a nominating petition. Petitions may be obtained beginning two months before a scheduled election, and are due two weeks before the scheduled election.

Nominations may be made from the floor only if there are no candidates listed for a position.

Section 2. The Chair, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary and Ombudsman shall be elected by a vote of the general membership.

Section 3. The election shall be held at the February membership meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at this meeting. Presentations limited to a previously agreed upon timeframe are then conducted. Winners will be chosen by majority vote, by secret ballot. If there is no majority, there will be a run-off between the two nominees with the most votes. No discussion will precede any run-off election.

Section 4. All Steering Committee members shall be elected for a term of one year and their term shall begin at the end of the regular meeting in which they are elected. Steering Committee members shall not serve more than three consecutive terms in the same office.

ARTICLE 8 - OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of DC for Democracy shall be as follows:

- Chair
- Treasurer
- Assistant Treasurer
- Secretary
- Ombudsman

Section 2. Duties of the officers shall be as follows:

The **Chair** shall assume general supervision of the affairs of DC for Democracy, preside at all meetings, serve as Chairperson of the Steering Committee, and act as the official speaker for DC for Democracy. The Chair shall ensure the timely implementation of motions approved at the meetings of the organization and the Steering Committee.

The **Treasurer** shall collect contributions, keep a record of the budget and finances of DC for Democracy, file all necessary and legal documents and reports, and make regular Treasurer reports to the Steering Committee. The Treasurer shall pay any approved contractual obligations of the organization and obligations up to \$200.00, as well as charges incurred under contracts which have been approved by the Steering Committee that exceed \$200.00.

The **Assistant Treasurer** shall assist the Treasurer in all capacities, and shall serve as the Treasurer if and when the Treasurer is unavailable.

The **Secretary** shall keep a record of the minutes of all DC for Democracy and Steering Committee meetings, maintain membership records, act as historian, and send out notices of the meetings. The Secretary will work closely with the Website/IT and Communications Chairs.

The **Ombudsman** shall serve as a direct, confidential, and impartial advocate for the interests of the membership. The Ombudsman shall make regular reports to the Steering Committee.

- Section 3.** Eligibility to hold one of the five officer positions requires DC residency.
- Section 4.** The term of office is one calendar year. Elected officers may not serve more than three consecutive terms in the same position.
- Section 5.** Eligibility to hold office shall not be limited by the fact of holding office in another organization, political or otherwise.

ARTICLE 9 – VACANCIES

Vacancies that may occur among Officers of DC for Democracy shall be filled by temporary appointment of the Chair and serve in an acting capacity until confirmed by a majority vote of the present and voting DC for Democracy members at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Notification of the temporary appointment shall be given immediately to the Steering Committee members, and at least 14 days prior to a confirmation vote by the membership. A special meeting will be called within sixty days, if no general membership meeting is scheduled, to elect an individual to permanently fill the position for the remainder of the term. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the meeting.

ARTICLE 10 – COMMITTEES

Section 1. Upon appointment and approval by elected officers, the following Steering Committee members will be responsible for managing a standing committee to perform strategic thinking, planning, and execution of their responsibility areas:

- Political Director
- Fundraising Chair
- Membership Outreach Chair
- Events Chair
- Website/IT Chair
- Communications Chair

Section 2. Standing committees shall be as follows:

- Candidates
Led by the Political Director
- Fundraising
Led by the Fundraising Chair
- Membership & Outreach
Led by the Membership Outreach Chair
- Events
Led by the Events Chair
- Website & Information Technology
Led by the Website/IT Chair
- Communications
Led by the Communications Chair

Section 3. Membership in any committee, excluding the Steering Committee, is open to all members of DC for Democracy.

Section 4. Standing committee meetings held in one location shall be held no less than quarterly (one per three months), upon notice in writing giving the hour and place of meeting to each member of DC for Democracy at least fourteen days before the date of the meeting..

Section 5. The Steering Committee may establish Ad-Hoc Committees from time to time, as found necessary to carry out the organization's purposes. An Ad-Hoc Committee may be authorized by a majority vote of the Steering Committee, and a committee chair will be appointed by Chair, to be approved by a majority vote of the Steering Committee. An Ad-Hoc Committee shall operate as do the Standing Committees for no more than 6 months, after which time it may be re-authorized for no more than an

additional 6 months, after which, it must be either added to the list of Standing Committees by amendment of the By-Laws, or abolished.

ARTICLE 11 - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*, shall govern DC for Democracy in all cases in which they are not inconsistent with the rules of order of the organization. A motion to "call the question" shall not be considered in order until an opportunity has first been provided for at least one person to speak in favor of the motion and at least one person to speak against it.

ARTICLE 12 - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and by-laws can be amended at any regular meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting after due notice of such amendment(s) has been sent to every member of the organization at least twenty-one days before the meeting where such amendment(s) shall be acted upon. The Constitution and By-laws shall be published in their entirety, dated and distributed to every member of the organization by the Secretary, no later than fourteen days after any meeting at which the Constitution and By-laws have been amended in a substantive way. Distribution and publication may include posting on the DC for Democracy website for public access.

ARTICLE 13 - RECALL OF OFFICERS

Any officer may be recalled by a vote of two-thirds of those members present and voting at a general membership meeting, provided notice of such recall action shall have been given in writing to all members at least twenty-one days before the meeting at which such recall action is to be proposed.