

**RHEA COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY BYLAWS
2009-2010**

**ARTICLE I.
NAME AND OBJECT**

SECTION 1: The name of this organization shall be the Rhea County Democratic Party.

SECTION 2: The object of this organization shall be to promote the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party and to aid in the election of Democrats and Democratic nominees for public office.

**ARTICLE II.
MEMBERSHIP**

SECTION 1: Eligibility. All residents of Rhea County, Tennessee who are registered to vote in this county and who believe in the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party are eligible to become members of the Rhea County Democratic Party.

SECTION 2: Nondiscrimination. Membership in the Rhea County Democratic Party shall not be denied because of race, color, sex, religion, age, gender, disability or ethnic origin.

**ARTICLE III.
POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

SECTION 1: Governance. The governance and direction of the affairs of the Rhea County Democratic Party shall be vested in the Rhea County Executive Committee (the "Executive Committee") and in officers of the Rhea County Democratic Party, as hereinafter set forth in these bylaws, subject to the laws of the state of Tennessee and such rules as may be established by the Tennessee State Democratic Executive Committee.

SECTION 2: Party Responsibilities. The Rhea County Democratic Party shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) Planning and conducting all county meetings and convention.
- b) Keeping and maintaining records of all Democratic Party meetings and business.
- c) Supporting the duly selected nominees of the Democratic Party.

**ARTICLE IV
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

SECTION 1: Membership. The Executive Committee shall be composed of a man and a woman elected from each county district (provided each district represents an equal number of voters in the county; if a county has difficulty filling Executive Committee positions on a district basis, then- and only- then, all representation should be at large; representation should be balanced if possible, and such a requirement may be written into the bylaws; extra members to the Executive Committee from a particular district may be awarded based on the Democratic vote in the last gubernatorial primary), plus those who become members pursuant to Article VII, Section 8 (Officers).

SECTION 2: Manner of Election. The Executive Committee members shall be elected at a (County Convention) called for the purpose of electing Executive Committee members at a date to be determined by the State Democratic Executive Committee.

SECTION 3: Resignations. The resignation of any member of the Executive Committee shall be made in writing and shall take effect at the time specified therein, or if no time is specified, then it shall take effect upon receipt of such resignation by the Chair or Secretary.

SECTION 4: Vacancies. A vacancy shall be filled by the nomination from the membership. Any vacancies occurring in the Executive Committee may be filled by the affirmative vote of the majority of the Executive Committee members present at any regular meeting even though less than a quorum of the Executive Committee exists. In the event of a vacancy, whether resulting from a resignation, expulsion or failure of any district to elect its Executive Committee members, the remaining members of the Executive Committee in attendance at any subsequent meeting may fill those Executive Committee positions from members of the Rhea County Democratic Party who reside in that district and who meet the requirements of a duly elected member as described in Section 1.

SECTION 5: Attendance: An Executive Committee member who fails to attend two (2) consecutive meetings of the Executive Committee, without a satisfactory excuse, as prescribed in Section 7, part c, to the majority of the members of the Executive Committee in attendance, may be removed from the position and the position shall be declared vacant.

SECTION 6: Manner of Acting: The act of a majority of the Executive Committee members present shall be the act of the Executive Committee, unless a greater number may be required by law or by these bylaws.

SECTION 7: Sanctions or Expulsion:

A) Notice and Opportunity To Be Heard: The Executive Committee may vote to impose sanctions on, or expel a member, but only if written notice is given that the issue will be taken up at the meeting prior to the meeting on which such action is voted. The member in question must be given written notice, and an opportunity to be heard.

B) Automatic Expulsion. A member of the Executive Committee shall automatically forfeit his/her membership in said committee (and the position shall be declared vacant) for the following reasons:

- i. In the event he/she qualifies for political office as an Independent or representing any political party other than Democratic Party and opposes a duly qualified Democratic nominee.
- ii. If he/she has two (2) unexcused absences during a term. An absence is excused if notice is given to the Chair or the Secretary prior to the start of the meeting and the reason for the absence is due to one of the following
 - a. illness
 - b. family illness or death
 - c. business, or out of town

Discretionary Sanctions or Expulsions. A member may be expelled in the discretion of the Executive Committee if a pattern of non-attendance is established, even if such absences are excused. Sanctions may be imposed against a member, or he/she may be expelled in the discretion of the Executive Committee, for demonstrating support of a candidate of another party in a pending election, or by working for or giving financial support to any such candidate running against a duly nominated candidate of the Democratic Party. The Executive Committee shall not impose discretionary sanctions or expel a member, unless and until such a member is given an opportunity to be heard and three-fourths (3/4) of the membership present and voting concur in a discretionary sanction or expulsion.

ARTICLE V MEETINGS

- SECTION 1. General.** All meetings of the Rhea County Democratic Party or the Executive Committee shall be well publicized in countywide media at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting. All meetings shall be held at convenient times and locations, and shall be open to the general public and media representatives (*except where legal counsel otherwise indicated based on a legal need for a closed meeting*).
- SECTION 2. Regular Meetings.** Regular meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held quarterly, or when called by the Chair or by one-third (1/3) of the Executive Committee members.
- SECTION 3. Special Meetings.** If more than sixty (60) days have passed since the last previous meeting, and if the Chairperson has not called a meeting, any six (6) members may call a meeting by notifying all members at least (7) days prior to such a meeting. If fewer than sixty (60) days have passed since the last previous meeting, any six (6) members may call a special meeting provided seven (7) days prior notice is given by mail to the membership. Any notification of a meeting must include time and location.
- SECTION 4. Quorum:** Fifty percent (50%) of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting of the Executive Committee. If less than fifty percent (50 %) Executive Board Members are present, the officers-Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary-may be included in the required fifty (50%) to achieve a quorum. If the required fifty percent (50%) still cannot be reached with including the officers, a majority of the members present may adjourn the meeting.
- SECTION 5. Convention Meeting.** A regular meeting of the Executive Committee shall be held without other notice than this bylaw immediately after, and at the same place as the convention.

ARTICLE VI CONDUCT OF CONVENTION

- SECTION 1. Convention.** The provisions for the holding of the county convention shall be as follows:
- a) The convention shall be well publicized in the local news media at least fourteen (14) days prior to meeting date.
 - b) All members of the Rhea County Democratic Party who are registered voters, and who attest they are bona fide Democrats by execution of affidavits or affirmations to that effect, are eligible to vote at the convention and to be candidates for the Executive Committee and vote.
 - c) The Chairperson, prior to voting, shall appoint an adequate number of Sergeants-at-arms to assure that only bona fide Democrats are present for the voting process. The Secretary or duly appointed representative shall verify the affirmations of all attendees.
 - d) Separate elections shall be held for each Executive Committee position.
 - e) The convention shall be called to order by the incumbent Chairperson of the Rhea County Democratic Party. The Convention shall then divide into caucuses, divided by district. Separate elections shall be held for each Executive Committee position. One man and one woman shall be elected from each district. A plurality shall prevail for each election. In the case of a tie, a runoff between those tied shall be held to decide the winner. In each caucus, a chair shall be selected and the chair shall then call for nominations for each Executive Committee position. After the nominations cease, the ballot is closed and the elections shall commence. Upon the completion of the election of two (2) Executive Committee members, the convention shall reassemble and each district shall report the Executive Committee members who have been elected from that district.

**ARTICLE VII
PROXIES**

- SECTION 1:** No Proxies Allowed. No proxy shall be allowed at any meeting of the Executive Committee.
- SECTION 2:** Unit Rule. No voting by the unit rule shall be allowed at any meeting of the Executive Committee.
- SECTION 3:** Open Voting. All votes shall be public and shall not be by secret ballot, or if vote by ballot, the ballots must be signed.

**ARTICLE VIII
OFFICERS**

- SECTION 1:** Officers: The officers of the Rhea County Democratic Party shall be Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, all of who shall be elected by the Rhea County Democratic Executive Committee for a two-year (2) term, or until their successors are duly elected and qualified.
 - a) To be eligible for the offices defined in Article VIII, Section 1, candidates shall be required to have attended one (1) meeting per quarter in the previous twelve (12) months preceding the County Convention unless excused for cause by majority of the Executive Committee.
- SECTION 2:** Election of Officers. The officers shall be elected by a simple majority of the members of the Rhea County Executive Democratic Committee present at the meeting held immediately following the convention. In the event a majority if not achieved, a runoff election shall be held until a majority prevails with the low vote getter being dropped from the next ballot. A complete list of all officers and Executive Committee members shall be forwarded to the Chair of the Tennessee Democratic Party within ten (10) days after their election.
- SECTION 3:** Vacancies. Vacancies in any office for any reason may be filled by the Executive Committee for the un-expired portion of the term.
- SECTION 4:** Chair. The chair shall preside over any convention, which may be called, and over the meetings of the Executive Committee. He/she shall perform all duties incident to the office of the chair and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Executive members from time to time. The chair shall go to the Executive Board members and majority of party members before recommendation of any committee or any offices outside the party that is required by the chair of the party.
- SECTION 5:** Vice-Chair. In the absence of the Chair or in the event of his/her death or inability or refusal to act, the vice-chair shall perform the duties of the chair, and in so doing, shall have all the powers of and be subject to all restrictions on the chair. He/she shall perform all duties incident to the office of vice-chair and such other duties as may be assigned to him/her by the chair or the Executive Committee.
- SECTION 6:** Secretary. The Secretary shall:
 - a) Keep the minutes of the Executive Committee.
 - b) Keep the minutes of any conventions which may be held.
 - c) See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of law and these bylaws.
 - d) Be custodian of the records of the Executive Committee.
 - e) Keep membership records and have general charge of membership books of the Executive Committee.
 - f) Keeps the sign-in sheets of the general membership meetings and gives a copy to the chair.

- g) In general, perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and such other duties as from time to time, may be assigned to him/her by the chair or the Executive Committee, or which may be required by law.

SECTION 7: Treasurer. The treasurer shall:

- a) Have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds and securities of the party from any source whatsoever, and deposit all such monies in the name of the Rhea County Democratic Executive Committee in such bank or other depositories as shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws.
- b) Keep and maintain, open to inspection by any member of the Executive Committee at all reasonable times, adequate or correct accounts of the funds and transactions of the Executive Committee, which shall include all matters required by law.
- c) Disburse the funds of the Executive Committee as he/she may be ordered by the Executive Committee.
- d) Render to the chair or to the Executive Committee whenever it may require or request it, an account of all his/her transactions as treasurer, and a financial statement in form satisfactory to it, showing the condition of the Executive Committee bank account.
- e) Register with the State Election Commission; and file any and all reports required by the State Election Commission (SEC) AND Federal Election Commission (FEC).
- f) In general, perform all the duties incident to the office of treasurer and such other duties as may be assigned to him/her by the chair or the Executive Committee, and
- g) If required by the Executive Committee, give a bond, to be paid for by the Executive Committee, for the faithful discharge of his/her duties, in such sum and with such corporate surety or sureties as the Executive Committee shall determine.

SECTION 8: Officers Not Required to be Members. It is not required that the officers be members of the executive Committee. Any officer who is elected by the Executive Committee who is not an elected member of the Executive Committee shall, upon his/her election as an officer, become a voting member of the Executive Committee.

SECTION 9: Neutrality. No officers shall openly support a candidate in a Democratic Primary, so that the officers present neutrality to maintain party unity.

SECTION 10: Members Must Support Nominees of the Democratic Party. No person shall be an officer or member of the Executive Committee if he/she shall not support nominees of the Democratic party. Failure to support the nominees of the Democratic Party shall be cause for removal. Officers may be removed under this regular meeting or any meeting called for that purpose after ten (10) days prior notice to all members of the Executive Committee.

SECTION 11: Resignations. The resignation of any officer of the Executive Committee shall be made in writing and shall take effect at the time specified therein, or if no time is specified, then it shall take effect upon receipt of such resignation by the chair or secretary.

ARTICLE IX COMMITTEES

SECTION 1: Committees Appointed By Chair. The chair may establish committees, to be composed of Executive Committee members or members as it deems appropriate. The chair will sit in on all committees.

SECTION 2: Term of Office. Each member of any committee shall serve at the pleasure of the person or entity creating the committee, but no longer than until the next convention or until the committee is terminated.

SECTION 3: Removal of any Member of the Committee. Any member of any committee may be removed by the person or persons authorized to appoint such member whenever, in their judgment, the best interest of the party shall be served by that removal.

ARTICLE X BUSINESS AT MEETINGS

The regular order of business at Executive Committee meetings shall be as follows:

- a) Call to Order
- b) Invocation
- c) Pledge of Allegiance
- d) Roll Call
- e) Reading and approval of the minutes of previous meeting
- f) Treasurer's report
- g) Reports of committees
- h) Resolutions
- i) Unfinished business
- j) New Business
- k) Elections (if necessary)
- l) Announcements
- m) Adjournment

ARTICLE XI RESOLUTIONS

All proposed resolutions must be submitted to the chair at least one (1) week prior to a meeting. Emergency resolutions may be brought before the body by consent of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present

ARTICLE XII CONTRACTS AND EXPENDITURES

SECTION 1: Contracts, Expenditures, Bill Retention. All Executive Committees are urged to operate under an approved budget. Except in the case of an emergency for items not designated in the budget, no expenditure or bills shall be made or contracts entered into which purport to obligate the Executive Committee unless such expenditures or contracts are authorized by a majority vote of those present at a duly called meeting at which a quorum is present, except those expenditures for less than fifty dollars (\$50.00), which may be authorized by the chair of the Executive Committee. The treasurer shall present a monthly itemized statement of income and expenditures to the Executive Committee members. All paid bills shall be retained by the treasurer for a period of two (2) years.

SECTION 2: Audits. Auditors may be designated by the Executive Committee, who shall audit and examine the books of account of the Rhea County Democratic Party and shall certify to the Executive Committee the annual balances of the books which shall be prepared at the close of the fiscal year by, or under the direction of the treasurer.

**ARTICLE XIII
PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURES**

The current edition of Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern meeting of the Executive Committee in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws and any special rules of order which may be adopted.

**ARTICLE XIV
AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be amended or substituted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the total membership of the Executive Committee at any meeting of the Executive Committee called for the purpose of amending these bylaws.

**ARTICLE XV
RULES**

The Rhea County Democratic Party is a constituent party of the Tennessee Democratic Party. The Rhea County Democratic Executive Committee is an organization created by The State Democratic Executive Committee, with the State Democratic Executive Committee having full authority in all matters over the Rhea County Democratic Executive Committee. Any conflict between the Rhea County Democratic Party bylaws and the bylaws of the Tennessee Democratic Party, the bylaws of the Tennessee Democratic Party bylaws prevail.

Kathleen Garrison 4/17/09
CHAIR DATE

Barbara West 4/17/09
VICE-CHAIR DATE

Shirley M. Payne 4/17/09
SECRETARY DATE