

Bylaws

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE KNOX COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY, TENNESSEE

Readopted at Biennial Convention, Knox County Democratic Party, Tennessee,
March 25, 2017

In order to promote the goals and ideals of the Knox County Democratic Party in Knox County, Tennessee, and to provide an opportunity for any person interested in the Democratic Party to actively participate in Party affairs, the following Constitution and Bylaws are hereby adopted.

ARTICLE I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

The name of this organization is the Knox County Democratic Party, Tennessee

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Any registered voter of Knox County, Tennessee, who supports the goals and purposes of the Democratic Party, shall be entitled to membership and full participation in the Party.

ARTICLE III. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Section 1. Officers

The Officers shall consist of a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Delegates to the Biennial Convention shall elect these Officers in separate votes.

Section 2. Board of Governors

A. The Board of Governors shall consist of the Officers, the Immediate past Chair, a representative from the Knox County Young Democrats Club, a Representative from the UTK College Democrats, a Representative from the Democratic Women's Clubs of Knox County, a Representative from the Knox County Labor Unions, appointed by the KCDP Chair, with approval of the Board of Governors, a Liaison to the Latino Community appointed by the KCDP Chair, with approval of the Board of Governors, and a male and female Representative from each of the nine (9) Commission Districts of Knox County.

B. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the total membership shall constitute a quorum.

C. The District Representatives, for each Commission District, shall be elected at the Biennial Convention by the Voting Delegates from that Commission District in a District caucus.

D. The number of Voting Delegates in attendance at the District caucus shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. County Assembly

A. The County Assembly shall consist of the members of the Board of Governors and the Chair of each Ward/Precinct Committee or, in the absence of the Ward/Precinct chair, the next ranking officer of that committee.

B. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the total membership shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4. Ward/Precinct Committees

A. Ward/Precinct Committee shall be established for each voting Ward/Precinct in Knox County, Tennessee. Any person permanently residing in said Ward/Precinct who meets the eligibility requirements as stated in Article II is entitled to membership in a Ward/Precinct Committee. A Committee member is any person who either attends a Committee meeting or provides a written notice of intent for membership to the Committee's Secretary.

B. The number of such persons in attendance at a duly convened Committee meeting shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE IV. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Officers shall administer and carry out the policies adopted by the Board of Governors, County Assembly, or Biennial Convention, and shall otherwise perform the duties of their respective offices as may be required in the operation of the Party.

Section 1. The Officers A. – Chair

1.) The Chair shall supervise and manage the day-to-day business of the Party, and shall carry out other duties as are assigned.

2.) The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Governors, the County Assembly, and at the Biennial Convention. In the absence of the Chair, the highest ranking officer shall conduct these meetings.

3.) The Chair is automatically an exofficio member of any committee.

4.) The Chair may establish committees as needed and appoint special officers to serve ex-officio, with the concurrence of the Board of Governors (e.g., Parliamentarian, Sergeant-at-Arms).

B. – Vice-Chair – shall carry out those duties as assigned by the Chair, Board of Governors, County Assembly, or Biennial Convention.

C. – Secretary – shall keep a complete and accurate record of the meetings of the Convention, Board of Governors, and County Assembly, and shall make such records available for examination by any person affiliated with the Democratic Party. The Secretary shall pass the records and documents of the Party to his/her successor. The Secretary shall perform other duties that the Chair may assign.

D. – Treasurer

1.) The Treasurer shall keep a full and accurate record of all receipts and a full and accurate account of all disbursements and shall deposit all monies in the name of the Party into a federally insured bank or trust company within five (5) business days of receiving such monies.

2.) The Treasurer shall disburse funds of the Party only as directed by the Chair, Board of Governors, County Assembly, or Biennial Convention. The Treasurer shall keep a full and accurate record of all disbursements. All checks or orders for payment shall be signed by the Treasurer and countersigned by the Chair or Vice-Chair.

3.) The Treasurer shall be responsible for the completion and timely filing of all Party financial reports required by the laws of the State of Tennessee and the United States of America.

4.) The Treasurer shall provide a full and accurate report to every Board of Governors, County Assembly, and Biennial Convention meeting. The Treasurer shall pass the records and documents of the Party to his/her successor.

E. -- Primary Election Neutrality

1.) The County Party shall not endorse or campaign for any specific Democratic Primary Candidate prior to or during a contested local, state, or national Democratic Primary Election.

2.) County Party Officers with the exception of the Chair, acting apart from their party office, may support and participate in campaigns for local, state, or national candidates of their choice in contested Democratic Primaries.

3.) Because all who seek to become Democratic National Convention Delegates must register in support of a specific Presidential Candidate prior to the delegate nominating procedure, the County Party Chair may declare personal support for a specific Presidential candidate.

Section 2. The Board of Governors

A. The Board of Governors shall be the policy making body of the Party subject only to the authority of the County Assembly, the Biennial Convention, and the limitations imposed by the Constitution and Bylaws. The Board of Governors shall hold regular monthly meetings. Five (5) days notice shall be given prior to each meeting.

B. The Board of Governors shall create and maintain a Manual of Policies and Procedures, which will address standing rules, committees, and other day-to-day business of the Party.

Section 3. The County Assembly

A. The County Assembly shall have power and authority over the affairs of the Party subject only to the ultimate power and authority of the Biennial Convention and the limitations imposed by the Constitution and Bylaws.

B. The County Assembly shall meet quarterly and at such other times as called by the Chair or a minimum of ten (10) members of the Executive Committee. Five (5) days notice shall be given prior to each meeting.

Section 4. The Ward/Precinct Committees

A. The Ward/Precinct Committees shall have the duty and responsibility of organizing and promoting the Democratic Party in each Ward/Precinct. The Committees shall meet a minimum of once per year. Each Committee shall meet at such other times as may be required to conduct its affairs. Five (5) days notice shall be given prior to each meeting. A member must be present to vote.

B. The Ward/Precinct Committees shall reorganize during the ten days immediately preceding the Biennial Convention. Each Ward/Precinct Committee shall elect a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and other Officers as necessary. They shall also elect delegates to the biennial convention.

C. The Committee Chair and Secretary shall maintain a membership roll of all members including addresses, emails, and telephone numbers, and shall furnish a copy of the roll to the Secretary of the Party. Rolls must be filed within 60 days of the conclusion of the Biennial Convention to be included in the official records.

D. Ward/Precinct Committee Officers and members shall cooperate with the Party Officers, Board of Governors, and County Assembly in all matters concerning the Party.

ARTICLE V. THE BIENNIAL CONVENTION

Section 1. Biennial Convention

A. A Biennial Convention of the membership shall be held at the time and date specified by the Tennessee Democratic Party. The purpose of the Convention is to elect Officers and re-adopt the County Bylaws as prescribed by the Tennessee Democratic Party.

B. The Convention shall have ultimate authority and absolute power over all affairs of the Party pursuant to the Constitution and Bylaws.

C. The number of properly authorized Voting Delegates in attendance at the Convention shall constitute a quorum.

D. The District Representatives will be elected in a district caucus meeting at the Convention and results announced prior to the election of the officers.

Section 2. Prior to calling of the Biennial Convention – The Chair, in cooperation with the other Officers and Board of Governors, shall allocate the number of votes each Ward/Precinct shall be entitled to vote at the Convention. The allocation shall be based on a ratio to the vote cast in the preceding Democratic Gubernatorial primary in that Ward/Precinct. The Chair shall advise each Ward/Precinct Committee of the number of allotted votes.

Section 3. In a Ward/Precinct Committee meeting prior to the Convention

A. The W/P Committees shall elect Voting Delegates to the Convention equal to the number of votes allotted. The Committee may also elect a number of Alternates. The Committee Chair shall certify the names of the Voting Delegates and Alternates to the Credentials Committee prior to the Convention; otherwise, the Delegates and Alternates will not be officially recognized.

B. If a person is unable to attend the w/p meeting prior to the convention, he/she may still be considered a member of the w/p committee and can be elected as a delegate/alternate to the convention, if a written request is sent to the w/p chair and/or the District Chair prior to the w/p meeting.

Section 4. Alternates. In the event a Voting Delegate to the Convention is not present, the Ward/Precinct will not lose the vote provided the Ward/Precinct Committee elected an Alternate Delegate who is present to vote at the Convention.

Section 5. Voting Delegates. Participation in the Convention shall be open to all members, but only officially elected Voting Delegates or Alternates may vote.

Section 6. – Voting Method

A. On all matters to be voted at the Convention, each Ward/Precinct Chair shall poll his/her Delegates prior to the vote, and upon roll call by Ward/Precinct, the Chair shall announce the results of this polling, which shall be recorded as the official vote of the Ward/Precinct.

B. The Convention, voting as a body by a majority vote, may suspend this rule and call for votes to be taken by all assembled Delegates as a body.

Section 7. Challenges – Any member of a Ward/Precinct may challenge the organization of his/her Ward/Precinct or the method and selection of a Voting Delegate within the Ward/Precinct by submitting the complaint to the Credentials Committee, which shall make an investigation and make a decision thereon. The decision of the Credentials Committee shall be final unless the Convention elects to assume jurisdiction of the matter.

Section 8. Oath – The following Oath will be taken by those elected to the Board of Governors. The oath must be taken before assuming office.

I (name) do hereby solemnly promise, before my fellow Democrats, to fulfill the duties of the office to which I have been elected, to the best of my ability. I also promise to support the nominees of the Democratic Party. I further promise that if for any reason I cannot perform these duties I shall resign so that a replacement may be obtained. I also understand that a violation of this oath can result in removal from office.

ARTICLE VI. DEMOCRATIC PARTY VOTING RULES

Neither proxies, nor voting by the unit rule, nor secret ballot shall be allowed at any meeting of the Knox County Democratic Party, nor at any meeting called under the Party's auspices, nor at a meeting of any committee thereof.

ARTICLE VII. LATE NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES

In the event that it becomes necessary to nominate a Democratic candidate for public office after the time has expired to make such nomination through the regular process, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The Chair shall call a meeting of the County Assembly for this purpose, giving at least five day's (5) notice thereof to members of the County Assembly.
2. The Chair shall have published a newspaper notice of such meeting at least three (3) days in advance.
3. If the time remaining to meet a nomination deadline does not permit such advance notice, then the notice shall be given by telephone, personal courier or other means.

ARTICLE VIII. IMPEACHMENT AND VACANCIES

Party Officers, District Representatives and Ward/Precinct Chairs may be impeached from office by the County Assembly for inattention to duty, incompetence, or failure to support candidates for office nominated by the Democratic Party.

Section 1: Sanctions or Expulsion

A. Notice and Opportunity to be heard. The County Assembly 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 County Assembly shall automatic forfeit his/her membership in said committee (and the position shall be declared vacant) for the following reasons:

- 1) 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.
- 2.) If an elected County Assembly member demonstrates disloyalty to the Democratic Party by publicly supporting an opponent of a Democratic Candidate in any partisan general election held in Knox County for office at the National, State, County, or City government. Public support may be defined as:

a.) Soliciting campaign contributions or contributing to an opponent of a Democratic Candidate in a pending partisan election.

b.) Publishing an article or a "letter to the editor" in support of or in opposition to a Democratic Candidate in a pending partisan election.

c.) Recruiting campaign volunteers to support an opponent of a Democratic Candidate in a pending partisan election. d.) Canvassing or phone banking voters in support of an opponent of a Democratic Candidate in a pending partisan election.

3.) If he/she has three (3) 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 one of the following: illness; family illness or death; business; or out of town.

C. Discretionary Sanctions or Expulsions. 1.) A member may be expelled at the discretion of the County Assembly if a pattern of non-attendance is established, even if such absences are excused.

2.) Sanctions may be imposed against a member, or he/she may be expelled in the discretion of the County Assembly, for demonstrating disloyalty to the Democratic Party, either in the form of a public announcement of 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.

3.) The County Assembly shall not impose discretionary sanctions or expel a member, unless and until such a member is given an opportunity to be heard and two-thirds (2/3) of the membership present and voting concur in a discretionary sanctions or expulsion.

Section 2. Vacancies. Vacancies so created and vacancies occurring for other reasons shall be filled as follows:

A. Party Officer: The County Assembly shall fill the vacancy of any Party Officer by having the Chairperson appoint a successor for the remainder of the unexpired term, with the concurrence of the County Assembly.

B. District Representative: The Chair, in consultation with the District, shall appoint a new representative for the remainder of the unexpired term to fill the vacancy of any district representative, with the concurrence of the County Assembly.

C. Ward/Precinct Chair: The highest-ranking Ward/Precinct Vice Chair shall fill the vacancy of any Ward/Precinct Chair until such time as the committee elects a new Chair. In the absence of a Vice Chair, a temporary Chair shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The temporary Chair shall call a meeting of the Ward/Precinct Committee within sixty days (60) for the purpose of electing a new Chair.

ARTICLE IX. TENNESSEE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

In the event of a conflict between this Constitution and Bylaws and the rules of the Tennessee Democratic Executive Committee, the Constitution and Bylaws of the Tennessee Democratic Party shall take precedence.

ARTICLE X. RULES OF ORDER

The most recent edition of Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of any meeting of the Party except where such rules are inconsistent with this Constitution and Bylaws.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS to the By-Laws

A. Any member of the Knox County Democratic Party may propose amendments to the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors must approve the amendments by a 2/3 vote and then give at least 28 days notice to the County Assembly.

B. The County Assembly may amend the proposals and approve the amendments by 2/3 vote.

C. The amended by-laws shall be voted upon by the Biennial Convention and passed by a 2/3 majority to be approved.

Readopted at the Convention on March 25, 2017