



Polk County Democratic Central Committee Constitution & Bylaws

As amended March 27, 2023

Preamble

We, the members of the Polk County Democratic Central Committee, in order to organize and perpetuate a representative, effective and responsible party organization in Polk County, Iowa, advance the interests of the Democratic Party nationally, sustain and advance the principles of social justice and democracy, and uphold civil rights, civil liberties, and constitutional government, do establish this Constitution and Bylaws for the Polk County Democratic Central Committee.

Article I. Name

Section 1. This organization shall be known as the Polk County Democratic Central Committee.

Article II. Purpose

Section 1. The purpose of this organization shall be to elect Democrats in Polk County, the state of Iowa, the third Congressional District and in the Nation, and to further all Democratic interests and principles as stated in the preamble to this Constitution by any and all legal actions deemed necessary by the organization.

Article III. Membership

Section 1. The Central Committee shall consist of two committee persons from each precinct within our county. At each precinct caucus in even numbered years, two committee persons shall be elected by majority vote, from registered Democrats residing within the precinct.

Section 2. If no alternate for a particular precinct was elected at caucus, any member of the County Central Committee may nominate for election, by the Central Committee, an attending resident from the same precinct as the non-attending member to act as the alternate committee member until such time as the seated member is present to participate in the Central Committee meetings.

Section 3. A Committee person shall serve until a successor is elected, unless he or she is removed by the Central Committee for non-residency, inattention to duty, incompetence or he or she resigns. Inattention to duty includes but is not limited to

support of a candidate for public office who is running against a candidate nominated by the Democratic Party or failure to attend three consecutive meetings without a valid excuse. To resign, the committee person shall submit a written resignation to the Chairperson.

Section 4. An accusation that a member or officer of the Central Committee is guilty of inattention to duty or is incompetent shall be submitted, in writing, to the Chairperson. The Chairperson is then obligated to inform the person accused of the accusation and the procedures for removal contained in Section 5, including his or her right to appoint two members of the special committee. Failure to respond shall result in automatic expulsion.

Section 5. A special committee shall be appointed to investigate the complaint upon receipt of a response from the accused indicating his or her desire to remain on the committee or to continue serving as an officer. The special committee shall consist of two Central Committee members selected by the accused and two Central Committee members appointed by the Executive Committee. The special committee shall investigate the complaint and make a recommendation to the Central Committee. Removal from office shall require a two thirds vote of the members present.

Section 6. When a vacancy occurs on the Central Committee the vacancy shall be announced via notice to Central Committee members prior to the next meeting of the Central Committee. At the next meeting following the announcement of the vacancy, the floor shall be open for nominations of an alternate from the precinct in which the vacancy exists to fill the vacancy. If there is no alternative willing or able to accept the nomination, the floor shall be open for nominations of any Polk County registered Democrats from the precinct to fill the vacancy. When nominations have ceased, the balloting shall take place. Vacancies for alternate positions may be filled by the Central Committee via election following nominations from the floor in the first meeting following notice to the Central Committee of the vacancy.

Article IV. Meetings

Section 1. The Central Committee shall meet at least once every three months. The Central Committee may by majority vote, direct the Chairperson to call meetings at times selected by the Central Committee. Upon receipt of a petition signed by twenty-five percent of the members of the Central Committee, the Chairperson shall call a meeting, which must be held within twelve days of the receipt of the petition.

Section 2. The Chairperson shall cause notice of meetings to be mailed (postal or electronic) to each member and officer of the Central Committee at least seven days before the date set for a meeting. The meeting notice shall include a list of the vacancies on the Central Committee or executive Committee that were announced at the last meeting and any persons nominated to fill those positions. The notice shall also include the name of any person whose removal is to be considered.

Article V. Officers and Executive Officers

Section 1. The officers of this organization shall be the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and Affirmative Action Chairperson. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers.

Section 2. The biennial organizational meeting shall take place in the odd numbered years at a time set by the County Central Committee between March 1 and April 1. Members of the County Central Committee assembled shall forthwith elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and such other officers as they may deem necessary. Such officers need not be selected from County Central Committee membership; however, they shall be qualified voting members of the Iowa Democratic Party. The term of office for each officer shall begin immediately upon election by the County Central Committee, and shall continue for two years, and until the successor is elected and qualified; unless he or she is sooner removed by the County Central Committee for non-residency, inattention to duty, incompetence, or support of a candidate for public office who is running against a candidate nominated by the Iowa Democratic Party.

Section 3. The term of office for each officer shall begin immediately upon election by the Central Committee and shall continue until a successor is elected, unless he or she is removed by the Central Committee for non-residency, inattention to duty or incompetence or he or she resigns. Inattention to duty includes but is not limited to support of a candidate for public office who is running against a candidate nominated by the Democratic Party or failure to attend three consecutive meetings without a valid excuse. A written resignation shall be submitted to the Chairperson when an officer resigns unless the officer resigning is the Chairperson in which case the resignation shall be submitted to the Vice-Chairperson

Section 4. When a vacancy occurs on the Executive Committee, the vacancy shall be announced at the next meeting of the Central Committee and the floor declared open for nominations. At the next meeting following the announcement of the vacancy, the floor shall again be open for nominations. When nominations have ceased, the balloting shall take place.

Article VI. Duties

Section 1. The Chairperson shall serve as chief executive officer, acting in exofficio capacity on all committees, and shall preside at all Central Committee meetings and meetings of the Executive Committee. The Chairperson shall be responsible for hiring staff in positions authorized by the Central Committee and at the salary approved by the Central Committee. The Chairperson shall serve no more than four consecutive two year terms.

Section 2. The Vice-Chairperson shall assume the duties of the Chairperson in that officer's absence and shall in the event of a vacancy on the Executive Committee assume the duties of the vacant office until the vacancy is filled.

Section 3. The Secretary shall be in charge of all files and non-financial records of the Central Committee and shall prepare necessary documents and general correspondence and preserve such material. The Secretary shall be responsible for sending notices seven days prior to meetings when directed to do so by the Chairperson.

Section 4. The Treasurer shall have custody of the funds of the Central Committee and shall present a written report of total receipts, disbursements, accounts payable, and accounts receivable at each meeting. The Treasurer shall file all proper financial reports with the County Auditor and the Campaign Finance Disclosure Commission in accordance with Iowa Campaign Finance Laws. In addition, the Treasurer shall be in charge of all financial records and transactions of the Central Committee, subject to a mandatory, independent, internal audit at least once each calendar year. An internal audit committee shall be convened by the Executive Committee to complete the internal audit by June 30th each year. A budget shall be presented to the Central Committee for approval by May 1st each year. The Treasurer shall have final authority on questions of compliance with the Iowa Campaign Finance Laws. This section shall apply to the period ending December 31, 2017 and all succeeding years.

Article VII. Affirmative Action Committee

Section 1. The Affirmative Action Committee shall consist of the person elected at the most recent County Convention to serve as the Affirmative Action Representative to the District Affirmative Action Committee, who shall serve as Committee Chair, and two or more additional members elected by the Central Committee at its first regular meeting following its biennial organization meeting in accordance with the Constitution of the Iowa Democratic Party.

Section 2. The Central Committee may, in any regular meeting, elect additional members to fill open or additional positions on the Affirmative Action Committee.

Article VIII. Subcommittees

Section 1. The Chairperson shall appoint such subcommittees as the Chairperson deems necessary to assist the Central Committee in performing its duties and responsibilities.

Section 2. The Chairperson shall appoint the members of each subcommittee, naming one member as Temporary Chair. In its first meeting, the subcommittee shall elect a Permanent Chair by majority vote of those present and voting. The subcommittee may elect other officers, as deemed necessary.

Article IX. Neighborhood Group Subcommittee.

Section 1. The Chairperson shall appoint members of a Neighborhood Group Subcommittee pursuant to the process set out for subcommittee appointment in Article VIII of these Bylaws.

Section 2. The purpose of the Neighborhood Group Subcommittee shall be to:

- a. Accept applications from registered Polk County Democrats for recognition of Polk County Democratic Neighborhood Groups and make recommendations to the Central Committee regarding whether to approve applications and to suspend or revoke recognition;
- b. Create forms for application for recognition;
- c. Research each application as necessary;
- d. Reasonably assist applicants for recognition by providing information to assist with the application;
- e. Report its recommendations to the Central Committee regarding whether to approve applications for recognition, or suspend or revoke recognition;
- f. Maintain records of completed applications for recognition;
- g. Create forms for annual record updates for recognized Neighborhood Groups, including but not limited to current lists of officers;
- h. Receive and review information received from Polk County Democrats regarding compliance by recognized Neighborhood Groups with the terms and conditions of this Article; and,
- i. Provide support to recognized Neighborhood Groups.

Section 3. In deciding whether to recommend approval of an application, or suspension or revocation of recognition, the Subcommittee shall, among other things, consider whether the Neighborhood Group:

- a. Provides its members reasonable access to official meeting minutes or financial or other organization records;
- b. Treats all members with respect, including respect for the expression of dissenting views;
- c. Complies with the organization's bylaws and policies;
- d. Does not discriminate against persons based on race, sex, LGBTQ+ status, religion, disability or age, including that it permits young persons to join the organization and participate in a manner consistent with the level set forth in Article I of the Iowa Democratic Party Constitution;
- e. Follows democratic processes in all decisions and debate; and,
- f. For a recognized Neighborhood Group, appears to no longer be an active organization.

Section 4. Upon report by the subcommittee to the Central Committee regarding whether to approve an application for recognition of a Neighborhood Group, the Central Committee shall debate and vote whether to approve the application. Applications are approved upon a vote of the majority of Central Committee members and seated alternates present and voting in favor of approval.

Section 5. Upon report by the subcommittee to the Central Committee recommending suspension or revocation of recognition, the Central Committee may vote to suspend or revoke recognition of a Neighborhood Group which has failed to comply with the standards set forth in subsection (3).

- a. A vote to suspend or revoke recognition shall pass by a simple majority of members and seated alternates present and voting.
- b. The Central Committee may suspend recognition for a period of time in order to afford the Neighborhood Group the opportunity to come into compliance with the standards set forth in subsection (3).
- c. Upon revocation of recognition a Neighborhood Group shall be ineligible to apply for recognition for a period of one year from the date of revocation.

Section 6. Benefits for Recognized Neighborhood Groups, shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a. Participation in County Central Committee Neighborhood Group leadership meetings;
- b. Assistance drafting Bylaws and creating organizational structure;
- c. Inclusion of Neighborhood Group announcements in Polk County Central Committee communications and during Central Committee meetings; and,
- d. Training as deemed appropriate by the County Central Committee.

Section 7. No application for recognition shall be approved for a Neighborhood Group with geographic boundaries that overlap those of another recognized Neighborhood Group.

Section 8. The following Neighborhood groups in existence and within their geographic boundaries as of the date of the adoption of this Article shall be considered to be recognized Polk County Democratic Neighborhood Groups pursuant to the terms of this Article and are subject to all terms and conditions of this Article:

Ankeny Area Democrats, Bondurant Area Democrats, Clive Democrats, Des Moines West Side Democrats, Downtown Des Moines Democrats, East Des Moines Democrats, East Polk Democrats, Grimes Area Democrats, Heart of Des Moines Democrats, Johnston Area Democrats, Northwest Des Moines Democrats, Polk City Democrats, SouthSide Democrats, Southeast Polk Democrats, Urbandale Area Democrats, West Des Moines Democrats, and Windsor Heights Democrats.

Article X. Quorum

Section 1. Twenty-five committee members shall constitute a quorum for Central Committee meetings. Only Central Committee members shall be allowed to vote. No motion shall be adopted with less than five (5) affirmative votes.

Article XI. Parliamentary Authority

Section 1. The Parliamentary authority shall be the rules contained in the current edition of *Roberts's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

Article XII. Amendments

Section 1. This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended at any Central Committee meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present, providing that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous meeting and included in the meeting notice.