

Bylaws of the Southwest Michigan Local Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America

Adopted October 22, 2018, approved by the NPC January 16, 2019.

ARTICLE I. Name.

The name of the Chapter shall be the South West Michigan Local Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (SWMIDSA), a not-for-profit corporation.

ARTICLE II. Purpose.

The Southwest Michigan Local Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America seeks to facilitate the transition to a truly democratic and socialist society, one in which the means/resources of production are democratically and socially controlled.

DSA rejects an economic order based solely on private profit, alienated labor, gross inequalities of wealth and power, discrimination based on age, race, gender identity, sex, or ability, religion, national origin, documentation status, sexual/romantic orientation, and brutality and violence in defense of the status quo.

We are explicitly anti-racist, and we resist white supremacy in all its forms where ever it appears. We support equality and social, economic, and health justice for all people, including people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and those with disabilities.

DSA envisions a humane social order based on popular control of resources, production, and economic planning, the sustainability of all ecosystems, equitable distribution, gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships.

Our conception of socialism is a profoundly democratic one. It is rooted in the belief that human beings should be free to develop to their fullest potential, that public policies should be determined not by wealth but by popular participation, and that individual liberties should be carefully safeguarded. It is committed to a freedom of speech that does not recoil from dissent, to a freedom to organize independent trade unions, women's groups, political parties, and other formations — recognizing these as essential bulwarks against the dangers of an intrusive state. It is committed to a freedom of religion that acknowledges the rights of those for whom spiritual concerns are central.

We are socialists because we are developing a concrete strategy for achieving that vision. In the present, we are building a visible socialist presence within the broad democratic Left. In the long run, we hope to build a majority movement capable of making democratic socialism a reality in the United States. Our strategy acknowledges the class structure of the U.S. society. This class structure means

that there is a basic conflict of interest between those sectors with enormous economic power and the vast majority of the population.

ARTICLE III. Membership.

Section 1. Membership.

Members of the Southwest Michigan Local Chapter of the DSA will be those individuals whose dues to national DSA are paid in full, and who reside and/or work in the vicinity of Southwest Michigan. Individuals may not be members of the Local Chapter without being members of national DSA. It will be the responsibility of members to approve policies and guidelines for the operation of the Local Chapter, to elect delegates to the national convention, to vote on matters related to national policy, and to make recommendations on issues and other matters to the National Political Committee of DSA.

Section 2. Removal of Members/Officers.

If a member in good standing is found to be in substantial disagreement with the principles or policies of national DSA, or if they are found to be consistently engaging in undemocratic, disruptive behavior, or if they are found to be under the discipline of any democratic centralist organization, the Local Chapter may vote to expel them from the Local Chapter of DSA.

In order for such a finding to be made, another DSA member must formally present written charges against the member in question to the Local Chapter Executive Committee, which shall set the date of a Local Chapter meeting for deliberations on the charges. The member in question must receive a copy of the written charges and notice of the meeting a minimum of two weeks before that meeting takes place. Expulsion of a member requires a two-thirds vote of the Local Chapter meeting. An expelled member in good standing may appeal to the National Political Committee of DSA.

Section 3. Voluntary Donations.

As mandated by the national constitution and bylaws, the Local Chapter may establish a Local Chapter pledge system of voluntary donations for its members. The payment of a Local Chapter donation will not be a requirement for voting or for holding Local Chapter office. The Southwest Michigan Local Chapter of DSA will set a voluntary annual pledge at every General Meeting.

Section 4. Privacy Concerns.

Care will be taken to protect the privacy of each member's contact information.

ARTICLE IV. Local Chapter Meetings.

Section 1. General Meeting.

The Local Chapter will hold a minimum of one (1) General Meeting annually for purposes of electing officers. All members of the Local Chapter will be sent notice of and an agenda for the General Meeting. Notice shall be sent by electronic means, but individuals who have not provided an email address must be sent a paper copy or contacted by phone or text. The General Meeting will elect Local Chapter officers and may adopt an annual budget. In general, it is the highest legislative body of the Local Chapter. The General Meeting may coincide with a Regular Meeting.

Section 2. Regular Meetings.

The Local Chapter will hold Regular Meetings at least four times annually, the time and place of which shall be set in a schedule published and distributed by the Local Chapter Executive Committee via email. Annually, individuals who have not provided an email address will be informed by postal mail that they must request in writing a paper copy to receive correspondence by postal mail. The Regular Meetings will set Local Chapter policy and work priorities, and they will include political education sessions.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee will set the agenda for Regular Meetings. Effectively, the Regular Meeting is the operating legislative body of the Local Chapter.

Section 3. Emergency Meetings.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee may call an Emergency Meeting of the Local Chapter on five days' notice when an urgent and important matter requires deliberation.

Section 4. Quorum.

A quorum of 10 percent of the members (but not fewer than six persons) is required for General, Regular, or Emergency Meetings to transact business.

ARTICLE V. Local Chapter Officers: Powers and Duties.

Section 1. Officers and Terms.

The officers of the Local Chapter will be Co-Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, and Social Media Coordinator. The term of office will be one year and shall run from February 1 to January 31 or until their successors are elected. Of the officers, at least two gender identities must be represented. One or more of the officers must have differing life experiences pertaining to race, sexual orientation, country of origin, and/or religion (or lack thereof).

Section 2. Vacancies.

In the event of a vacancy in any Local Chapter office, the Local Chapter Executive Committee will appoint an interim replacement. A vote will be held at the next Local Chapter Meeting to confirm the interim replacement. If the interim replacement receives greater than 50% of the vote, they are confirmed. If the interim replacement receives 50% or fewer of the vote, they are not confirmed, and candidates for the vacant position will be gathered, and a vote will be held at the next Local Chapter Meeting. The interim replacement will hold this position until the next General Election.

Section 3. Co-Chairs.

a. The Co-Chairs will be the chief executive officers of the Local Chapter. They will preside over Local Chapter and Executive Committee meetings. The Co-Chairs will be the official public spokespersons for the Local Chapter and will initiate such actions and policies as the Local Chapter's general welfare may demand.

b. The Co-Chairs will be responsible for coordinating the day-to-day operations and political work of the Local Chapter.

c. The Co-Chairs will report to Local Chapter Regular Meetings on the business of the Executive Committee Meetings, at which time a copy of the minutes of those meetings will be available for inspection.

Section 4. Secretary

a. The Secretary will be responsible for answering all correspondence and queries of the Local Chapter via email, phone, and mail. They will maintain an up-to-date membership list of the Local Chapter. They will ensure effective communication with the national DSA. They will temporarily assume the responsibilities of the Co-Chairs, if neither Co-Chair is able to do so.

b. The Secretary will be responsible for taking minutes of all Local Chapter and Executive Committee Meetings, and shall have custody of these minutes, and the resolutions, reports and other official records of the Local Chapter. The Secretary will send out minutes to all members of the Local Chapter via email after Local Chapter Meetings and General Meetings. They shall transfer official records in good condition to their successor. Official records shall include meeting minutes and member lists.

Section 5. Treasurer.

The Treasurer will be responsible for the funds and financial records of the Local Chapter. All funds collected by the Local Chapter will be turned over to the Treasurer, who shall deposit them in a bank account under the name of the Local Chapter. In cooperation with the Secretary, the Treasurer will be responsible for ensuring that membership dues are paid up-to-date. The Treasurer will prepare the

annual Local Chapter budget and deliver the Local Chapter financial report to the General Meeting of the Local Chapter, as well as periodic progress reports as requested by the Executive Committee of the Local Chapter.

Section 6. Social Media Coordinator.

The Social Media Coordinator will be responsible for representing the Local Chapter via social media, including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, the official Local Chapter website, and any additional social media platforms. The Social Media Coordinator will be expected to use sound judgement during interactions with the public and must ensure all passwords are kept safe. They shall transfer all social media sites to their successor, at which point the new Social Media Coordinator must make new passwords for all social media platforms.

Section 7. Additional Duties.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee may assign additional temporary duties to any interested member of the Local Chapter, so long as such assignments do not conflict with the designation of responsibilities outlined in these Bylaws. These temporary duties do not endow the assigned member with any powers outlined in Article VI.

Section 8. Disqualification from Office

Active law enforcement members are excluded from positions on the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VI. Executive Committee.

Section 1. Composition.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee will be composed of the five officers of the Southwest Michigan Local Chapter and the chair(s) of any Local Chapter branches.

Section 2. Duties.

The Executive Committee administers the affairs of the Local Chapter and oversees the implementation of the decisions of the General and Regular Meetings; it may also propose policy to the General and Regular Meetings. It shall have the power to receive reports of any committee or branch, and advise thereon, to call emergency meetings of the Local Chapter, and to act on any matter that requires immediate and urgent action. The Executive Committee is the regular executive body of the Local Chapter, and thus subordinate to its Legislative bodies, the General and Regular Meetings.

The Executive Committee will be responsible for guiding program activities for the Local Chapter, for proposing guidelines and policies that will subsequently be voted on by members in good standing of DSA, and for acting on the organization's behalf between Local Chapter meetings.

Members of the Executive Committee are expected to attend all General and Regular meetings, and most Executive Committee Meetings. Members of the Executive Committee are also expected to maintain open and prompt lines of communication with each other, reading correspondence related to Local Chapter activities within a timely manner and responding in a timely manner when appropriate. If a member of the Executive Committee fails to perform these duties, the process for discharging an officer from the executive committee shall follow the protocol outlined in Article XI Section 4.

Section 3. Meetings.

The meetings of the Executive Committee will be held at the call of one of the Co-Chairs at such intervals as may be determined by a prior Executive Committee Meeting or by consultation with any three members of the Executive Committee. All members of the Executive Committee must be given seven days oral, written, or electronic notice of regular Executive Committee Meetings; a 24-hour notice may be given under special emergency circumstances.

Section 4. Quorum.

A quorum of a simple majority, including at least three (3) of the five (5) officers, is required for the transaction of Executive Committee business.

ARTICLE VII. Branches.

Section 1. Definition.

A branch is a subgroup of the Local Chapter consisting of at least five members in good standing with national DSA. Branches may be defined by geography or language. Each branch will have one chair, as voted on by members of the branch. Branch chairs will hold membership on the Local Chapter Executive Committee. Members may chair more than one branch, though they will not receive any additional Executive Committee voting power.

Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) Chapters within SWMIDSA's area may affiliate as a branch of SWMIDSA, in which case the YDSA Chapter may send a representative to the SWMIDSA's Executive Committee.

All branches require a vote of at least 2/3rds of the people in attendance at a branch meeting to be officially recognized as part of the Southwest Michigan Local Chapter of DSA.

ARTICLE VIII. Committees.

Section 1. Duration.

The Local Chapter will have Ad Hoc Committees or Working Groups, which will exist for a limited and explicit duration. Ad Hoc Committees may be established by a vote of members in good standing at a Regular Meeting of the Local Chapter.

Section 2. Duties.

Chairs of Ad Hoc Committees will keep the Executive Committee and the Regular Meetings of the Local Chapter informed on the activities of the Committee.

ARTICLE IX. Delegates to National, Regional, and State Bodies.

Local Chapter delegates and alternates to the National Convention will be elected by members in good standing of the Local Chapter of DSA. Elections for the National Convention delegation shall be held on the schedule announced by the national organization. Elections to regional or state organizations will be held on the schedule announced by those organizations.

ARTICLE X. Prohibited Activity

The Southwest Michigan Local Chapter shall not engage in activity prohibited by the IRS guidelines established for 501(c)(4) organizations or similar rules established by the state of Michigan. Nor shall the Local Chapter engage in any activity prohibited by resolutions adopted by DSA's National Convention or DSA's National Political Committee.

ARTICLE XI. Elections, Nominations and Recalls.

Section 1. Nominations Committee.

A three (3) person Nominations Committee shall be established at least one month prior to every election by vote of a Regular Meeting. It shall solicit and receive nominations for the positions to be elected.

Section 2. Nominations Process.

Nominations for Local Chapter officers and delegates to the National Convention shall be opened at least 10 days before and closed at the election meeting. The call for nominations shall be announced to all members in good standing of DSA as soon as nominations are open.

Section 3. Uncontested Positions.

If a position is uncontested, the nominee may be declared elected by acclamation. If any member objects to such election by acclamation, members must vote “yes” or “no” for the nominee.

Section 4. Recall

Any officer of the Local Chapter of DSA may be recalled for malfeasance or failure to fulfill their duties or obligations as an officer. In order to recall or remove an officer, a member in good standing must formally refer a request to remove said officer to the Local Chapter Executive Committee, which will set a date of a Local Chapter meeting for deliberations on the accused officer’s removal. The officer in question must receive written documentation of the specific reasons for the removal request and notice of the meeting a minimum of two weeks before the meeting takes place. The accused officer will be given a chance to speak in their own defense at this meeting. Removal of an officer requires a two-thirds vote of the Local Chapter meeting.

Section 5. Temporary Leadership After Local Chapter Status

After the Local Chapter is officially recognized by national DSA, the Organizing Committee will operate as a temporary Executive Committee, up until the first General Election. The General Election is to be held at least by February 1st, although the Organizing Committee may call for an early election with a quorum of 50% of Organizing Committee members. An early election will follow the process outlined in Article XI. Elected Officers will assume their positions immediately after being elected.

If the Local Chapter is not officially recognized by February 1st, elections will be held at the first meeting after being recognized, which will be a General Meeting.

ARTICLE XII. Amendments.

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be made by written resolution, endorsed by five members of the Local Chapter of DSA, and submitted to the Executive Committee in advance of a General or Regular Meeting. The Executive Committee is required to provide the Local Chapter membership with two weeks’ written or electronic notice of the proposed amendments. The amendment must be approved by a majority vote of two consecutive (Regular or General) Local Chapter meetings.

ARTICLE XIII. Rules of the Local Chapter.

Section 1. Rules.

The Rules contained in *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised 11th Edition*, shall govern this Local Chapter in cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these

Bylaws. Consensus decision-making is desirable where feasible, but meetings must submit to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* upon the request of a member.

Section 2. Action Out of Order.

Any action taken by an officer or member of the Local Chapter in contravention of these Bylaws is null and void.

ARTICLE XIV. Distribution of assets.

Upon dissolution of the organization, any residual assets shall become property of the national organization of Democratic Socialists of America.