

# Resolution on the Adoption of SWMI DSA Standing Rules

**WHEREAS**, the Southwest Michigan Democratic Socialists of America (SWMI DSA) requires a clear and consistent set of rules to govern the conduct of chapter meetings and events, that fosters an anti-racist environment and considers the diversity of its members and their culture.

**WHEREAS**, these rules should ensure the efficient and democratic operation of the chapter while promoting accountability and accessibility, and equitable participation for all members;

**WHEREAS**, a review of the existing rules and newly proposed resolutions has been conducted, and it is now necessary to formally adopt a consolidated set of Standing Rules for the chapter;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Southwest Michigan Democratic Socialists of America officially adopts the following Standing Rules to govern chapter business, effective, equitably immediately:

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the chapter will have a digital and printed copy of the standing rules available to members at meetings.

# **SWMI DSA Standing Rules**

## **Preamble**

These Standing Rules are adopted by the Southwest Michigan Democratic Socialists of America (SWMI DSA) to govern the conduct of chapter meetings and events for our diverse membership. They are subordinate to the SWMI DSA Constitution and Bylaws and are interpreted in accordance with the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

## **Rule 1. Authority of the Presiding Officer(s)**

**1.1.** An Executive Committee Co-Chair shall preside at all business meetings in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of SWMI DSA and the 11th Edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. The presiding officer shall rotate between the co-chairs such that each co-chair shall facilitate no more than half of the total annual meetings of that chair's term, when possible.

**1.2:** The presiding officers shall be the chapter co-chairs unless delegated otherwise by the co-chairs before chapter meetings. The co-chairs may reclaim the chair by a majority vote of the members at the meeting.

**1.3.** The presiding officer shall vote as a member and may vote to break a tie.

**1.4.** The presiding officer shall clearly distinguish between statements made while presiding and statements made as a voting member.

## **Rule 2. Decorum (adapted from DSA's Guidelines for Respectful Discussion)**

All discussion and debate should follow the DSA Guidelines for Respectful Discussion. DSA's Guidelines for Respectful Discussion are:

**2.1.** Assume good faith in your fellow comrades. Please try to speak from experience, speak for yourself, and actively listen to each other. When someone makes a point, repeat what you heard, summarize, and ask clarifying questions like "did you mean X" or "what makes you say that" to get more information. Encourage yourself and others to maintain a positive attitude, honor the work of others, avoid defensiveness, be open to legitimate critique and challenge oppressive behaviors in ways that help people grow. We want to "call each other in" rather than calling each other out — in other words, if you are challenging someone's ideas or behavior, do

it respectfully, and if you are being challenged, receive it respectfully. Remember, mistakes will be made, nobody is perfect.

**2.2.** Know whether you need to “step up” or “step back”. Please respect others by recognizing how often, much, and loud you’re speaking and whether or not you’re dominating conversation. Step back to leave space for others to voice their opinions and feelings. If the facilitator of the meeting asks you to wrap up, recognize that you should step back. This especially applies to participants who have privileged backgrounds.

**2.3.** Please ask yourself “Why am I talking?”. We have a limited amount of time for discussion and to accomplish the tasks before us. When in discussion, please ask yourself “Why am I talking (WAIT)?” Consider whether or not what you want to say has already been said, whether what you want to say is on topic or if there’s a better time and place to say it, and other methods for showing how you feel about the conversation (nodding your head, etc.)

**2.4.** Please recognize and respect others’ feelings, background, and cultural differences. Many people have different levels of experience, knowledge, and feelings in social justice and radical activism and all participants should respect and embrace this diversity. Many people from different backgrounds have different definitions of what it means to be an “activist” or “radical.” While we all don’t have to agree on everything, we should respect our diversity of opinions. Recognize that everyone has a piece of the truth, everybody can learn, and everybody has the ability to teach and share something. Don’t use language that’s clearly oppressive or hurtful. Please, refrain from using acronyms or complicated language that could exclude others.

**2.5.** We have “one mic” so please do not interrupt or speak while others are talking. Many of us will have different opinions on matters. However, speaking while others are talking or adding comments when they cannot respond appropriately does not build community. If you have a disagreement, wait for your turn to address it. This is basic politeness.

**2.6.** Respect the facilitator when they use Progressive Stack. Progressive Stack is a form of leading discussions which involves a facilitator keeping a list of names of people who wish to speak. The facilitator scans the group during discussion and if someone wishes to speak, they raise their hand and catch the facilitator’s eye. The facilitator nods and makes eye contact to indicate the person is now put on the list to speak, and then the person can put their hand down so it does not distract other discussion participants. However, the facilitator does not simply write a list of names in the order that people raise their hand. Rather, if someone who has not spoken raises their hand, they go to the top of the list. If someone who is of an oppressed group raises their hand, they go to the top of the list unless they have already contributed significantly to the discussion.

**2.7.** Have a sense of humor. Who said movement building can’t be fun? This is a great opportunity for people to get to know one another, building lasting friendships and relationships, to laugh, love, and build a movement.

**2.8.** Please inform facilitators of inappropriate behavior promptly.

## **Rule 3. Electronic Attendance and Participation**

**3.1.** Voting members may attend and participate in meetings via video conference, and such members shall count toward quorum.

**3.2.** The presiding officer reserves the right to limit the participation of members not present in person, if their participation is disruptive for technological reasons.

**3.3.** No proxy voting or voting in absentia shall be permitted unless expressly authorized in advance by the assembly.

**3.4** Any comments submitted electronically will be added to the progressive stack and included where appropriate.

## **Rule 4. Motions and Resolutions**

**Preamble.** As a chapter, we recognize that the voices of marginalized people need to be uplifted. As such, we will structure discussions in a way that encourages equitable and inclusive participation during regular meetings.

**4.1.** Written resolutions, actions, and agenda items may be submitted by members in good standing, working groups, or the Executive Committee no later than seventy-two (72) hours before the next Regular Meeting.

**4.2.** Such resolutions shall be placed on the agenda under “New Business,” with the order of items determined by the presiding officer(s) and/or Executive Committee.

**4.3.** The Executive Committee and members shall work in good faith to consider late submissions, while respecting chapter democracy.

**4.4.** All remarks during debate shall be addressed to the presiding officer.

**4.5.** Debate on motions shall be subject to the following limits, unless indicated otherwise by the facilitator or general body:

- a.** Each speaker shall be recognized for no more than two (2) minutes.
- b.** Each member may speak twice on the same motion.
- c.** Debate shall be limited to four (4) speakers in favor and four (4) speakers opposed, unless extended by the assembly.

**4.6.** Reports not recommending action shall be limited to five (5) minutes, unless otherwise provided in the agenda.

4.7. The presiding officer shall direct questions for information to the appropriate member.

## **Rule 5. Voting**

5.1. Votes shall ordinarily be taken by card vote.

5.2. The presiding officer, upon initiating the vote, asks first for the members-in-good-standing in favor, then those against, then those abstaining.

5.3. In the case of a close vote, the presiding officers, or five members in good standing, may order a counted card vote.

## **Rule 6. Progressive Stack**

6.1. The presiding officer shall recognize speakers using progressive stack to ensure equitable participation.

6.2. A presiding officer, facilitator, or other delegated person, shall keep a list of those on stack to keep order.

## **Rule 7. Delegates at Meetings and Events**

7.1. Delegates are defined as individuals attending while representing an organization outside of SWMI DSA.

7.2. All delegates must sign in before entering the meeting or event space.

7.3. All delegates must read and agree to the DSA Code of Conduct and these Standing Rules.

7.4. Delegates may not canvass members inside the meeting space without prior approval of the presiding officer and/or Executive Committee.

7.5. Delegates may not distribute or display materials without prior approval of the presiding officer and/or Executive Committee.

7.6. Delegates are not guaranteed speaking time unless approved in advance by the presiding officer and/or Executive Committee.

7.7. Delegates involved in electoral campaigns must obtain prior approval from the Executive Committee to ensure compliance with chapter policy.

7.8. Delegates invited by working groups, members in good standing shall receive agenda priority over uninvited delegates.

## **Rule 8. Materials at Meetings and Events**

**8.1.** All materials available at chapter-wide meetings and events must be approved by the Executive Committee.

**8.2.** Working groups may have up to two (2) pieces of material available unless additional items are approved by the presiding officer and/or Executive Committee.

**8.3.** Materials originating outside of SWMI DSA must be kept separate from official materials and clearly labeled as non-DSA material.

**8.4.** Available materials must remain within designated areas.

**8.5.** Materials may not be distributed inside meeting spaces unless approved by the presiding officer and/or Executive Committee.

**8.6.** Materials left behind by outside organizations may be immediately recycled after the close of the meeting.

## **Rule 9. Suspension of the Rules**

**9.1.** Any of these Standing Rules may be suspended by submitted motion carrying at least two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting.

# Glossary

Co-Chair: The two chapter co-chairs, elected by membership.

Facilitator / Presiding Officer / Meeting Chair: The person, or people, leading the meeting. This involved facilitating discussion and overseeing procedural motions.

Progressive Stack: a technique used to raise feedback that favors voices that have not been heard before or recently over others. When a discussion is opened, attendees may raise their hand or signal their desire to be added to the discussion “stack”. Based on the members of the stack, the facilitator may pick speakers who raised their hands first but with the opportunity to highlight others in the stack that have not been heard from previously or may offer specific information relevant to the subject at hand.

## Useful Links

DSA Guidelines for Respectful Discussion

[https://www.dsausa.org/organize/respectful\\_discussion/](https://www.dsausa.org/organize/respectful_discussion/)

SWMI DSA Bylaws

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w35tJ1N1cakYIBFnSdUzv19qUMug798ZQJxS5GoVd8l/e/dit?usp=sharing>

DSA Harassment Policy (Resolution 33)

<https://www.dsausa.org/about-us/harassment-policy-resolution-33/>