

Spotsylvania County Democratic Committee Bylaws

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ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Spotsylvania County Democratic Committee, hereafter referred to as the “Committee”.

ARTICLE II AUTHORITY

The Committee is organized under the authority of and in accordance with the Party Plan of the Democratic Party of Virginia. Nothing in these bylaws is intended to conflict with either the Code of Virginia and/or the Democratic Party Plan. If any such conflict should occur between these bylaws and the Code of Virginia and/or the Party Plan, then the Code of Virginia or the Party Plan, as the case may be, shall have precedence. Any applicable principle or provision in the state Party Plan not covered by these bylaws shall be embraced and applied as required.

All activities of the Committee, including mass meetings, primaries, conventions, and fund raising shall be conducted in accordance with the Party Plan.

ARTICLE III PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The purpose of the Committee shall be to conduct the affairs of the Democratic Party of Virginia in Spotsylvania County, including the nominating process for, and support of, Democratic candidates in Spotsylvania County, and to encourage the registration of and voting by eligible residents of the County. The Committee shall adhere to and implement the policies and platform contained in the national and state Democratic Party Platforms.

ARTICLE IV BIENNIAL REORGANIZATION

Section 1

The Spotsylvania County Democratic Committee shall be elected by Democratic voters of Spotsylvania County by Mass Meeting or Caucus, every two years. The reorganization process begins in an odd numbered year. The window for the reorganization is the period between December 1st in the odd numbered years and the - 15th of the following January. The Committee must determine the date of the reorganization meeting and communicate that information to the State Party by November 15th of each odd numbered year. The mass meeting or caucus may be held on Saturday or any other weekday evening. Any waiver of the time requirements stated above must be approved by the State Party Chair or the Steering Committee. The Chair shall give at least seven (7) day’s notice, but not more than two weeks of the mass meeting. The notice shall be a paid political advertisement in the main local newspaper or an advertisement posted on the SCDC webpage. The advertisement, or other form of notification, will meet all requirements as specified by the Virginia Democratic Party Plan or current DPVA policy. No fees may be charged for attending the Caucus. All attendees must meet state party requirements for participation in the caucus.

Section 2

The Declaration of Candidacy Form for election to the Committee shall be completed in writing, signed and filed with the Chair prior to convening of the mass meeting called for the purpose of reconstitution of the Committee. There shall be a \$25.00 filing fee which shall accompany the signed Declaration of Candidacy Form. Those persons filing, but not elected to the Committee will be refunded the \$25.00 filing fee.

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

Section 1

Membership is open to Democrats who are registered to vote in the county, who have applied for membership and have paid membership dues. An active member is eligible to participate and vote in all approved meetings of the Committee. Any person applying for membership is subject to verification that he or she is registered to vote.

There shall be no limit on the number of members who actively serve on the committee.

Section 2

An initial filing fee of \$25 is required to join the Committee. Any person who pre-files for membership upon reconstitution of the Committee or thereafter and pays the required fee is exempt from that year's dues. The filing fee may be prorated on a monthly basis. Dues are paid annually in the amount of \$25. Dues may be pro-rated on a monthly basis. The filing fee and dues may be waived for financial hardship upon a confidential written request to the SCDC Chair. The filing fee and dues are waived for full time college students.

Section 3

Members of the Committee shall be elected at regular meetings or at any special meeting called by the Chair. Prospective members shall file a Declaration of Candidacy form with the Chair no less than 15 days before the next meeting. Nominations may be made by any eligible voting member. Prospective members shall be approved by a simple majority of members in attendance

Section 4 Ex-Officio Members

In addition to all other members of the Committee, each elected Democratic State Legislator representing the Spotsylvania County Districts and any local Democratic elected official representing Spotsylvania County shall be a member of the Committee. Any other elected Democratic official representing Spotsylvania County shall be a member of the Committee provided he or she files a Declaration of Candidacy Form with the Chair, pays required dues and is nominated by an eligible voting member. Any Spotsylvania County registered voter who is a member of the Central Committee shall, upon election, become a voting ex officio member. Such members shall pay any required filing or membership fees.

Section 5

The absence without justification of any member from three (3) consecutive meetings shall change the status of that member to a non-voting Associate member. The Executive Committee shall approve the change. The Executive Committee shall have the option of retaining the member's voting status if the member is engaged in activities directly supporting the mission of the SCDC or for other legitimate reasons.

Section 6

An Associate member may become a Voting Member upon approval by the Executive Committee and may then vote at the next meeting that s/he attends.

ARTICLE VI NON-MEMBER AFFILIATES and FRIENDS

Affiliates shall consist of persons who wish to support the committee but who are not eligible to become members. Affiliates may attend meetings, may stand at the polls and participate in committee activities. Affiliates are not eligible to vote at committee meetings and are not counted for purposes of determining a quorum.

Friends of the committee are those who are eligible but do not wish to become members. They support the committee and receive the same privileges as those described for Affiliates. Friends are not eligible to vote at committee meetings and are not counted for purposes of determining a quorum

ARTICLE VII OFFICERS

Section 1

The officers of the Committee shall consist of a Chair and Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Section 2

The executive officers shall be elected by the membership at any time within forty (40) days following reconstitution of the Committee as provided herein. The term of office shall be for a period of two (2) years.

With the exception of a vacant Chair position, vacant officer positions shall be filled by nomination from the floor and voted on by a simple majority of members present.

In the event of a vacant chair, the Vice Chair shall assume the position of the Chair during the remainder of the current year. The position shall be filled by nomination for the beginning of the second year of the term or upon reconstitution of the Committee whichever comes first. Written or electronic notice shall be given to members not less than seven (7) days, but not more than two weeks prior to the election.

Section 3

The duties of the Chair shall include presiding at all meetings of the Committee, establishing permanent and ad hoc committees and appointing chairpersons thereof, delegating authority to permit the Committee to function without undue interruption or delay, administering and executing all rules adopted by the Committee.

The Chair shall serve as ex officio member of all standing committees and will cast a vote in the event of a tie. The Chair may appoint a parliamentarian, Sergeant-At-Arms and any other positions necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the Committee. The Chair may preside at regular monthly SCDC meetings.

Section 4

The duties of the Vice Chair include: performs all/any of the duties of the chair in the absence of the chair or as delegated by the Chair; and serves as a voting member of the SCDC Executive Committee.

Section 5

The duties of the Secretary shall include (1) recording minutes of regular, special, and executive committee meetings; (2) distributing minutes to members, (3) recording attendance at meetings, (3) maintaining the SCDC Membership list, and performs other duties appropriate for the office as assigned by the Chair.

Section 6

The duties of the Treasurer shall include: (1) Supervision over receipts and expenditures of the Committee; (2) presentation of a monthly financial report of expenditures and funds received; (3) maintains accounts and disburses funds as authorized by the Chair (4) develops an annual budget and presents same to the Executive Committee for review during the month of January and approval by the SCDC Committee at the February meeting; (5) acts as the primary contact with banks and other financial institutions; (6) acts as the primary contact with the postal service and maintains the post office box, files quarterly financial reports, as required by law, to the State Board of Elections; and (7) is responsible for preparing annual dues notices.

ARTICLE VIII

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1

The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer).

Section 2

The Executive Committee shall exercise general supervision over the affairs of the Committee and will meet quarterly. The Chair or designated representative shall conduct meetings of the Executive Committee. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be called by the Chair, except that special meetings may be called at the request of any two members of the Executive Committee. A record of meetings shall be recorded by the secretary and made available to the membership upon request.

The Executive Committee may not amend these Bylaws or act in a manner contrary to any duly passed motions or resolutions enacted by the Committee.

ARTICLE IX STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1

The Chair shall appoint chairs of the standing committees following the biennial reorganization. The standing committees for the current two year term are as follows:

- A. Fund Raising – responsible for taking appropriate efforts to raise funds required for the operation of the SCDC.
- B. Communications – responsible for maintaining the SCDC Webpage and other social media outlets; disseminates information on behalf of the committee in accordance with guidance from the SCDC Chair or designee.
- C. Precinct Operations – responsible for (1) identifying and training Democratic volunteers sufficient to staff every Precinct in the County all day on Election Day; (2) recruiting and training Precinct Captains and Poll Managers; (3) maintaining the Precinct Captains Handbook; and (4) generating VAN reports for canvassing, phone-banking and recruiting poll workers.
- D. Membership and Party Building – increasing membership and volunteer support for the Committee; helping members find roles within the committee; encourage members to volunteer to serve on one or more standing committees; and coordinating party building events throughout the year.
- E. Outreach – responsible for working to widen the public participation of County residents and diverse communities, new citizens, and new voters in the County Committee.
- F. Candidate Search and Development – responsible for identifying and recruiting Democratic candidates for local, state and federal offices and supporting their development as candidates.

Section 2

The Chair, with Executive Committee approval, shall prepare and provide a set of duties and responsibilities for each of the standing committee chairs.

ARTICLE X EXPENDITURES

Expenditures in excess of \$200.00 shall be approved by a majority vote of the membership. The following expenditures are exempt from the \$200 limitation: expenditures included in the approved budget, payment of fees to the State Party, District Committees, and payments to others generated by action of the State Party and the District Committees. The Chair shall approve other expenditures two hundred dollars or less.

ARTICLE XI MEETINGS

Section 1

The Committee shall meet monthly, every third Monday unless otherwise cancelled by a simple majority of those present and voting; The Chair may call a special meeting. A meeting may be called by at least ten percent of the Quorum members provided the signed call is filed with the Chair at least fifteen (15) days before the proposed meeting date. The Chair shall notify members of any meeting at least seven (7) days in advance, but not more than two weeks. All meetings are open to the general public as observers.

ARTICLE XII QUORUM

A quorum of thirty percent (30%) of the members of the committee shall be required to take any action, except to adjourn a meeting to another time or place. Proxy voting by any committee member in any meeting or caucus will not be permitted. Associate members Affiliates and Friends shall not be counted in determining a quorum.

ARTICLE XIII BYLAWS

Section 1

The Chair shall appoint, a Bylaws Committee consisting of at least three members. The Bylaws Committee shall be responsible for study, review, and keeping abreast of changes that would necessitate amendment to these by laws. Recommendations for changes shall be considered in accordance with the procedures as stated in Section 2 below. Upon request, any member shall be provided a copy of these bylaws. The Chair shall submit a copy of these bylaws to State headquarters within ninety (90) days of his/her election.

Section 2

These bylaws may be amended by the Committee at any regular or special meeting. Members shall be given a copy of the proposed amendments at least seven days (7) in advance of any meeting called to amend these bylaws. The Chair shall notify members at least seven (7) days in advance of any meeting to consider changes and/or additions to these bylaws. A two thirds vote of those members present and voting shall be required for the adoption of an amendment except those required by Section 3 below.

Section 3

If a change in the Virginia Code or the Party Plan is deemed by the Chair to necessitate a change in these bylaws, the Chair shall direct the Bylaws Committee to prepare proposed amendments to accommodate the needed change. Notice to members that recommendations from the Bylaws Committee shall be presented at a duly called meeting shall be sufficient to enable the full Committee to take action to incorporate the changes in the bylaws by a majority vote. Corrections of spelling, grammar, punctuation, or typographical errors shall not be considered amendments and can be made at any time.

ARTICLE XIV VOTER ACTIVATION NETWORK (VAN)

The Chair shall designate those who are authorized to access the VAN data base. The VAN is the sole property of the Democratic Party of Virginia and shall not be used for personal or commercial purposes. Data compiled from the data base is to be used for official business of the Spotsylvania County Democratic Committee and released as stated in the current VAN Policy Document. Information contained in the VAN database consists of State Voter Files and any use, other than stated herein, or abuse of such information is subject to state law.

ARTICLE XV WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Chair shall designate a Communication Committee Chair who will recruit a Web Master to maintain the Spotsylvania County Democratic Committee Website and social media outlets. The website is the sole property of the Spotsylvania County Democratic Committee.

ARTICLE XVI COMMUNICATION POLICY

The chair of the SCDC Committee is the Communications Director for the committee. Only the Communications Director or his /her, designee is authorized to release information in the name of the committee (i.e., press releases, web page, press conferences, etc.).

The committee USPS mailing list and e-mail lists are to be used for Committee business only and not for commercial or promotional purposes.

The Executive Committee maintains SCDC mailing lists (Executive Committee, Members, and Friends). Members are encouraged to suggest additions to the Friends list.

Standing Committee Chairs may have access to the mailing lists required to perform the functions of their committees.

The Webmaster and Communications Committee disseminate information on behalf of the committee in accordance with guidance from the Communications Director. Members desiring to share information (e.g., editorials, blogs, issue papers, etc.) in the name of the committee with the public members, affiliates and friends of the committee forward the information to the Chair of the SCDC Committee for release.

ARTICLE XVII PARTY SUPPORT

No committee member or officer of the Spotsylvania County Democratic Committee (SCDC) shall publicly support, endorse, or assist any candidate opposed to a Democratic nominee. If a member of the Spotsylvania County Democratic Committee is accused of undertaking such public activity, the SCDC shall vote on whether the member has undertaken such public activity. The member's removal from the committee shall be automatic if the committee finds that the member has engaged in such public activity. Such action shall not be taken without at least ten (10) days written notice to the accused member and an opportunity for him or her to refute such charges.

ARTICLE XVIII CANDIDATE SUPPORT

The Spotsylvania County Democratic Committee and the SCDC members are not required to support of any candidate who is publicly supporting a nominee on the ticket of any other political party in any general election where Democratic candidates for office appear on the ballot or who publicly supports any other candidate opposed to a Democratic nominee.

ARTICLE XIX NOMINATION AND ENDORSEMENT OF CANDIDATES

The role of the local committee in nominating Candidates for President, US Senators, US Congressman, VA Senate, VA House is defined by the Party Plan. The Committee will support the Democratic Nominees in General Elections except as noted in ARTICLE XVIII.

The Committee shall manage the process for nominating and electing Democrats to Constitutional Offices and the Board of Supervisors for Spotsylvania County (hereinafter "the County"). Nomination may be made by primary, caucus, or convention according to the Party Plan.

In Elections where there is no Democratic Candidate on the ballot (whether the office is partisan or non-partisan), the committee may endorse a candidate running as an Independent. The Executive Committee will compile a list of all races in which there is no Democratic Candidate and will recommend which (if any) candidate(s) to endorse and will provide a rationale for the recommendations. The recommendation will be brought to a vote of the entire committee at a regular or special meeting. The Chair of the Committee will announce

the meeting at least ten (10) days in advance. A simple majority of the members attending the meeting will determine the outcome.

ARTICLE XX REMOVAL OF OFFICERS OR MEMBERS

The Committee may vote to remove from office or membership any person whose performance of duty is detrimental to the Committee operation or violates Democratic Party Principles. A minimum of 2 Officers or 5 members is required to bring a proposal for removal of any member. Those charged under ARTICLE XX must receive written notice of pending action at least ten (10) days prior to the charge being heard by the Executive Committee in a closed session. The written notice shall describe the rationale for proposed removal. The Executive Committee will present its recommendation to the full Committee in a closed session at the next regular Committee meeting for final action. A simple majority of those voting members in attendance shall determine the outcome. The Committee’s decision may be appealed to the DPVA Steering Committee.

s/s _____
Doug Ferguson

s/s _____
AL DURANTE, Chair
Spotsylvania County Democratic Committee

s/s _____
Jane Huffman

s/s _____
Robert Martin, Vice-Chair
Spotsylvania County Democratic Committee

s/s _____
Opal Stroup
By-Laws Committee Chair

Adopted: 21 March 2016