

Democratic Socialists of America

National Convention November 13-15, 2009

Evanston, Illinois

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can be a delegate to the DSA National Convention?

Any DSA member in good standing may be a delegate to the convention. Delegates are selected from DSA locals or if there is not a functioning local in your area a member may be an At-large delegate. Local delegate elections are conducted by the local DSA. At-large delegate elections (if required) are conducted by the DSA National Office. In practice it is very easy to become a delegate to the convention. The national office will accept any self-nominations to be a delegate and forward them to a local if appropriate.

Do I have to be a delegate to attend the convention?

DSA conventions are open to the public. Any member or non-member may attend convention events as an observer provided they pay the required registration fees.

Exactly where and when will the convention be held?

The convention will be in the Best Western University Plaza Hotel located at 1501 Sherman St. in Evanston, Illinois. The convention will open at 9:30 AM on Friday November 13th and conclude Sunday afternoon, November 15th. To be on the safe side we encourage delegates to book their return flights after 6:00 PM on the 15th.

Will there be special convention events or events on any other days?

A Dutch Treat dinner for delegates arriving on Thursday, November 12th is being organized. On site registration will also open Thursday evening. We are hoping to organize either a tour or lecture on Illinois labor history on Thursday the 12th

Can family members participate in convention events?

Delegates' family members are welcome to participate in convention events. Family members will have to pay the posted observer fees if they are not delegates. Unfortunately we are unable to provide childcare services at the convention.

When do I have to decide by?

Since travel is involved the sooner you make your decision the better off you will be. Most locals will be electing delegates in September. Local elections must be finished by September 29th and the results of elections reported to the National Director by October 2. At-Large delegates have until September 9st to nominate themselves. If you decide to go at the last moment it will still be possible to serve as a delegate by filling a vacancy.

How do I nominate myself to be a delegate?

Contact your local DSA group, or contact the national director by phone, mail or email, (fllewellyn@dsausa.org), or use the DSA Website: www.dsausa.org/convention2009.

What costs will I have to incur to be a delegate?

All delegates to the convention are responsible for their own travel and hotel costs as well as payment of the convention fee. The fee for this convention will be \$175.00 (\$200 at the door); the

fee covers convention materials, coffee breaks and snacks as well as the convention dinner. A block of rooms has been reserved for convention attendees at the Best Western University Plaza. The rate is \$109 (plus hotel tax) for a single or a double room. All delegates membership dues will have to be up to date by the time the convention opens.

Are there any programs to offset these costs?

YES, delegates to the convention participate in a mandatory **travel share** program that is intended to equalize or offset transportation costs. An estimated travel share will be set prior to registration. If their travel cost is less than the estimated travel share a delegate pays into the fund at registration. If they spent more than the estimate they will receive a rebate of the difference after the convention. Travel expense information is collected at registration so that the final travel share will be based on the exact cost. Covered expenses include airfare, bus fare or train fare. Mileage and tolls (based on the IRS charity mileage rate in effect at the convention (currently 14 cents a mile). Hotel costs, transportation to or from an airport or other terminal, and meal costs are not included. Delegates are expected to travel on 21-day non-refundable airline tickets or their equivalent. Transportation costs deemed excessive may be reduced for the purpose of calculating and dispensing rebates. Travel from outside the United States is not included. Delegates who travel from outside the United States may submit a travel cost based domestic airfare. A committee of delegates will work with the National Director to address any inequities that may arise in the administration of the travel share system.

For this convention we have added a new option to the travel share program that we hope will make it possible for more delegates to participate in the convention. Delegates traveling together by car or traveling by other less expensive travel methods may opt to pay a flat travel fee of \$75 which will be used to subsidize delegates required to fly. Those paying the flat fee would not receive a subsidy from the travel share fund; but would save \$125-\$145 on the traditional travel pool. We believe that this system will also increase the subsidy to those who have to fly.

In addition to the travel share a small amount of funds is available to help subsidize participation in the convention. For the most part these funds are reserved to help students and young people participate in the convention. Delegates may request help when they pre-register for the convention. Additionally some local DSA's are able to help delegates with costs. However most delegates will have to bear all of the convention costs. To request travel assistance contact the National Director at fllewellyn@dsausa.org

How will I find out about convention resolutions and other important convention business?

Any delegate, local or member may submit a resolution to be considered at the convention. All resolutions will be posted on the convention page of DSA's web site. Delegates will be emailed convention materials in the fall.

Is there any mechanism for pre-convention discussion among the delegates and other DSA members?

Locals are encouraged to have meetings to discuss convention issues in October of 2009. Additionally delegates will be able to participate in moderated convention discussion via email.

What about the convention hotel?

Individual delegates are responsible for making their own reservations before the cutoff date. We have negotiated very good rates for the convention, but they are only guaranteed until the cut-off date. The national office will facilitate delegates looking to share rooms in order to reduce costs. The DSA rates are generally good from November 11th until the 16th; it should be possible to extend the rate if you wish to come in early or stay LATER.

The special rate of \$109 per night (plus tax) for a single or a double has been set for the convention. The Best Western University Plaza is a union hotel. To guarantee the reduced rate you must reserve no later than October 13, 2009. The hotel does not have a web site that will allow you to make the reservation on-line at the group rate. The telephone number is 847-491-6400 and is staffed 24 hours a day. Be sure to mention the **Democratic Socialists of America** to get the reduced rate. As with all hotel reservations credit card information or pre-payment of the first night will be required when you make your reservation.

What about transportation from the airport.?

The closest airport is O 'Hare. It is possible to get to the hotel using public transportation, however it will be a long trip going in to Chicago and then back out to Evanston. The airport is about 15 miles from the Hotel. Information on Taxi or bus transportation from O'Hare will be posted on the web site soon.

What about driving to the Convention?

You should not need a car in for convention events. If you are driving, remember that you will have to pay for parking at the hotel. Hotel guest pay a reduced rate of \$7 night. They have a small parking garage. Also remember that the mileage allowance for the convention travel share is the IRS charity rate, currently 14 cents a mile. (However most drivers will want to opt for the flat fee plan.)

What about train service?

Amtrak has service to Chicago. There is a stop near the hotel for both the commuter railroad and the Chicago public transit.