

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA

2019 National Convention Rules

I. Preconvention Rules

I.A. Delegate Credentials

1. The NPC has established a target goal of 1,000 delegates to the 2019 DSA National Convention. Of the total number of delegates, 100 delegates will be reserved for at-large delegates who are not members of a chartered chapter. The remaining delegates will be distributed among chapters using a delegate-to-member ratio of 1-to-51, or *one delegate per every 51 members*, based on chapter membership numbers determined by the National Director 4 months prior to the Convention (Tuesday, April 2nd, 2019). Locals with fewer than 51 members will be apportioned one delegate. Locals with at least 51 members will get one delegate for every 51 members or greater fraction thereof. That is, the number of delegates allocated to each local is the number of members of the local, divided by 51, rounded to the nearest whole number. As an example, a local with 149 members will get 3 delegates, and a local with 199 members will get 4 delegates. The National Director shall include these calculations in a delegate apportionment announcement to all members.
2. Locals may elect alternates so as to ensure that their delegation is represented in full strength, even if initially-elected delegates are unable to attend. Alternate delegates only gain voting rights if an elected delegate needs to surrender their responsibilities for any reason, either before the Convention or during. Some alternate delegates shall be allowed to attend the Convention, regardless of whether their duties as alternate delegates are needed. Observers cannot under any circumstances get voting rights, although some, such as National Political Committee (NPC) members, have speaking rights.
3. The National Office shall inform locals of the delegates apportioned to them as of four months prior to the start of the convention, Tuesday, April 2nd.
4. Locals shall conduct and supervise their own elections of Convention delegates and alternate delegates in accordance with the applicable provisions of the DSA Constitution and Bylaws not before the apportionment of delegates and no later than June 18th, 45 days prior to the start of convention. Locals will be advised that delegate elections should use a proportional representation method of election, and of DSA Bylaws Article VI, Section 3, which requires that they use the Hare method upon petition. Any member in good standing of a local may run for delegate and vote in their local's delegate election. The National Office will offer to locals help with the use of OpaVote.com or a similar online election system to help them

conduct their delegate election, and will publish this offer in a communication to the full national membership.

5. Each local must report the result of its elections in writing to the National Office no later than June 23rd. The report must include full contact information, including an email address, for all delegates and should indicate if any delegate is requesting full or partial relief from the Travel Share requirements (outlined in future rules documents).
6. The National Office shall conduct and supervise the election of at-large delegates. A call for candidates for at-large delegates shall be sent to all at-large members no later than Friday, March 1st. At-large delegate nominations will be open 60 days, through Tuesday, April 30th. Candidates for delegate may submit a brief statement to be made available to voters. If at the close of nominations the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions (taking into account the diversity requirements), the candidates will be considered elected by acclamation. Otherwise, no later than Thursday, May 2nd, the National Office shall administer an online Single Transferable Vote election using OpaVote.com or similar online voting system. Every at-large member will be eligible to vote in the election. Voting will be open through Thursday, May 23rd. As required by DSA bylaws, no more than one-half of the available positions for at-large delegates may be filled by men and one-fifth of the available positions must be reserved for national and racial minorities. Those candidates who have been elected shall be immediately informed of their election by the National Office.
7. No person not in good standing as a DSA member through the end of the convention may be seated as a delegate or alternate delegate.
8. Based on the reports of local delegate elections and the outcome of the at-large elections conducted by the National Office, the National Office shall prepare a temporary roster of delegates and alternate delegates, which shall be sent to delegates, alternate delegates, locals, commissions and officers of DSA no later than Friday, July 12th.
9. Challenges to the credentials of any delegate or alternate must be submitted in writing to the National Office no later than Friday, July 19th and shall be forwarded to the Credentials Committee appointed by the NPC for consideration. Challenges must either name individual delegates or alternates from one delegation, or may name any one entire delegation, and must include a reason for the challenge that applies to all the credentials challenged. Challenges may include replacement(s) for the delegate or alternate challenged, or challenges may seek to seat additional delegate(s) or alternate(s) as part of a delegation. However, challenges that would result in a delegation exceeding its apportioned number of delegates will not be valid.
10. At the opening plenary, the Credentials Committee shall report to the Convention any challenge(s) filed according to rule 9 and may report its recommendation concerning them.

There shall be no more than one speaker for and one speaker against each credentials challenge.

11. The delegates listed on the Temporary Roster of Delegates shall vote on the Credentials Committee's recommendations, except that no delegate may vote on a challenge to his or her own credentials. Upon acceptance of the Credentials Committee those persons listed on the Temporary Roster of Delegates who are not subject to successful credentials challenge shall become the Permanent Roster of Delegates.
12. Each Local delegation and the At-Large delegation shall elect a chair who shall be responsible for official communications with the Administrative Committee.

I.B. Resolutions, Constitutional Changes, and Bylaws Changes

1. Any member or group of DSA members in good standing may propose changes to the DSA National Constitution or Bylaws electronically via Google Form between Saturday, March 2nd and Thursday, May 2nd. To be considered for debate at the Convention, proposed amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws must have a minimum of 50 signatures of support from DSA members in good standing. There is no limit on the number of Constitutional or Bylaws changes any member in good standing may sign as a supporter; however no individual may propose more than 4 Constitutional or Bylaws changes for debate at the Convention. Constitutional changes require a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the Convention to pass; Bylaws changes require a $\frac{3}{5}$ vote, but, in accordance with DSA Bylaws, the Bylaws may also be amended by majority at a National Convention if the amendments in question have been discussed at an NPC meeting at least three months prior to the Convention.
2. A Constitutional or Bylaws change should pertain to one topic. Constitutional or Bylaws Changes may propose to: (1) delete specified language from the Constitution and/or Bylaws, (2) add certain language in specified places to the Constitution and/or Bylaws, or (3) replace existing language with new language, indicating all the places in the Constitution and/or Bylaws where the specified language occurs. All supporting materials submitted along with Constitutional or Bylaws Changes (i.e. *Whereas* clauses) will be included in a compendium of Convention items released to the membership of DSA for background reading in advance of the Convention but not open to amendment.
3. Any member or group of DSA members in good standing may propose political or organizational resolutions electronically via Google Form between Tuesday, April 2nd and Sunday, June 2nd. To be considered for debate at the Convention, resolutions must have a minimum of 50 signatures of support from DSA members in good standing. There is no limit on the number of resolutions or amendments to resolutions a member in good standing

may sign as a supporter, however no individual may propose more than 4 resolutions for debate at the Convention.

4. The Resolutions and Amendments Committee will issue a resolutions template to guide resolution drafting. In keeping with Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised, only the operative sections of resolutions (i.e. *Be it therefore resolved* clauses) will be recorded and subsequently published following the Convention. All supporting material submitted along with resolutions (i.e. *Whereas* clauses or rationales) will be included in a compendium released to the membership of DSA for background reading in advance of the Convention but not open to amendment.
5. The Resolutions and Amendments Committee will work with authors of proposed Convention items to encourage authors writing on the same topic to combine items or adopt “friendly” amendments in advance of the Convention wherever possible. The Resolutions & Amendments Committee will release a compendium of proposed resolutions and bylaws and/or constitutional amendments to the membership of DSA no later than Sunday, June 23rd via email and on the Convention website.
6. Any member or group of members in good standing may submit amendments to Resolutions, as well as amendments to Constitutional and Bylaws Changes, electronically via Google Form until the submissions period for amendments closes Tuesday, July 2nd. To be considered for debate at the Convention, amendments must have a minimum of 50 signatures of support from DSA members in good standing. There is no limit on the number of amendments a member in good standing may sign as a supporter or submit for debate at the Convention.
7. If there are more than 10 proposed resolutions, changes and amendments, the Resolutions & Amendments Committee will poll the delegates as to which require more time for discussion and should be scheduled earlier, which could be included in a consent agenda.
8. The Resolutions & Amendments Committee will release a final compilation of all proposed Constitutional and Bylaws Changes, Resolutions, and Amendments electronically via email to the entire organization and on the Convention website by Friday, July 26th.
9. If major events occur too late for a resolution to be submitted through the above-described process, resolutions about them may only be considered under suspension of Rules.

I.C. NPC Nominations

1. The National Political Committee will release a description of the NPC and its members' duties after the January NPC meeting.
2. Any DSA member in good standing may be nominated as a candidate for the NPC elections through a nominations resolution passed by a majority vote of either: (1) any chapter or OC; or (2) by a national committee, commission, working group, or the Afro-Socialist Caucus. Chapters and OCs are strongly encouraged to make decisions on nomination in a way that includes the broadest number of members as the chapter shall determine is practicable, such as at membership meetings or through membership-wide online votes. Nomination should not be seen as an endorsement of a candidate or their politics, but as an affirmation that the member is active in the work of DSA and is constructive and comradely towards their fellow members. To formalize their candidacy, each nominee must complete the candidate [questionnaire](#) furnished by the national organization between Tuesday, April 2nd, and Sunday, June 16th, including a copy of their nominating resolution signed and dated by the co-chairs or equivalent of either the local or national body issuing the nomination resolution.
3. The NPC Election Committee will release a compendium of candidate questionnaires no later than Thursday, June 27th via email and on the Convention website.
4. The NPC Election Committee will additionally host at least one national candidate forum or debate via Zoom no later than Thursday, June 30th. The number, format, and content of subsequent candidate forums will be set by the NPC Election Committee based on the number of candidates.
5. The NPC Election Committee will provide special name tags for NPC candidates at the National Convention, so that they may be easily identified by delegates.

I.D. Caucuses, Slates, & Interest Groups

1. The organizers of this Convention cannot and will not forbid the formation of caucuses, factions, or slates, but will not recognize them by offering any quasi-official platform space.
2. The National Convention program will set aside time and space for self-organized meetings. A caucus, regional group, committee, or any other ad hoc group may register for space to hold a self-organized meeting during this time.

II. Convention Rules

II.A. Convention Committees

1. The Rules Committee has drafted these Rules and will remain available to interpret them.
2. The Resolutions & Amendments Committee receives resolutions submitted to the Convention and makes recommendations to the Convention on the disposition of resolutions and changes to the Constitution, Bylaws and resolutions submitted after the resolution deadline. Its work is detailed above under **Resolutions, Constitutional Changes, and Bylaws Changes**.
3. The Elections Committee oversees election of the at-large delegates and election of members to the National Political Committee. Its work is detailed above under **Delegate Credentials 6. and NPC Nominations**. At the Convention it will oversee voting for the National Political Committee.
4. The Credentials Committee is responsible for reporting to the Convention the roster of delegates and making recommendations on any properly filed challenges to the credentials of any delegate. The Credentials Committee may also make recommendations to the National Director concerning any need for subsidies for housing, registration fees or travel.
5. The Administrative Committee is responsible for making recommendations to the National Director regarding any issue that arises on the administration of the Convention, particularly recording credentials changes, such as in the event a delegate needs to transfer their voting credentials to an alternate. The committee will also make recommendations around issues of climate or accessibility at the Convention. Members of this committee shall include the Preconvention Program & Logistics Committee, DSA's National Director, DSA national staff, and the Convention marshals team. Members of the committee will be stationed throughout the duration of the Convention at: (1) a credentials table outside of the main Convention hall; and (2) at a recording table at the front of the main Convention hall.
6. These committees propose their chairs at the beginning of the Convention.

II.B. Program

1. The preconvention Program and Logistics Committee has broad discretion in designing the program. Certain parts, however, are required.

2. An officer of the organization shall call to order the opening session of the Convention at which time the Convention shall elect one Chair for the convention, who may delegate the task of chairing for a period to someone from a pool of members trained for the task.
3. At the opening plenary, membership on all committees and chairs for each shall be confirmed by the Convention.
4. The Convention shall vote to adopt the II.D. Procedural Authority section of the Convention Rules.
5. The National Director shall submit to the Convention on its opening day a report on the activities of the staff since the 2017 National Convention.
6. The Secretary-Treasurer shall submit to the Convention on its opening day a report on the finances of the organization.
7. Reports by the NPC, by YDSA, and about the political situation in general are strongly recommended. A brief introduction to Robert's Rules is also recommended.
8. The program will to the extent possible follow the recommendations of the Resolutions and Amendments Committee as to the order in which items are considered and the time allocated to each.

II.C. Recording

1. The National Director of DSA shall work with the Administrative Committee to keep the official record of the Convention and may appoint assistants as they deem necessary following the Convention to form a Styles Committee responsible for editing small typos, punctuation, and grammatical errors, etc. and incorporating adopted amendments into the body of Resolutions and Constitutional or Bylaws changes.

II.D. Procedural Authority

1. A quorum of the Convention shall consist of fifty percent plus one of the registered delegates and seated alternate delegates.
2. An accredited alternate delegate may be seated for a delegate temporarily or permanently. The permanent seating of an alternate must be reported immediately to the Administrative Committee.

3. Each delegate and seated alternate shall be entitled to one vote on all questions coming before the Convention, except that each local chapter delegation may vote its full strength, provided that no individual casts more than three votes unless authorized to do so by the Convention.
4. Resolutions before the Convention shall be decided by majority vote of the delegates and seated alternate delegates present and voting. Proposed changes to the DSA Constitution shall require a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of present and voting delegates and seated alternates, and to the Bylaws shall require a $\frac{3}{5}$ majority. All procedural motions shall be passed by the majorities required by Robert's Rules of Order.
5. No secret ballot shall be conducted. No Convention committee meeting or Convention session may be closed to DSA members pending space capacity, except that any meeting or session may be deemed closed to press.
6. All votes other than election of officers shall be by hand with Voting Cards issued by the Administrative Committee. The Chair of the Convention session (see Rule II.B.2) shall determine the results of hand votes and report the results to the Administrative Committee as well as announcing it to the convention session. A vote will be recorded at the request of any delegate or seated alternate, or if in the judgment of the Chair it is warranted due to closeness of the initial count. The Chair shall appoint such tellers as needed to assist in the counting of the vote.
7. Roll call votes shall be conducted at the request of thirty percent of the delegates and seated alternates present and voting, and shall consist of a recorded vote by delegation and individual at-large delegates.
8. Only delegates, seated alternate delegates, NPC members, national DSA officers, and DSA staff members may speak on questions coming before the Convention in plenary session. Speakers on all motions shall be limited to two minutes, unless the convention accepts a different limit.
9. No amendments to Resolutions or amendments to Changes to the Constitution and Bylaws may be made from the floor (except in the event of the suspension of these rules pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order). A Styles Committee shall be appointed by the NPC, subsequent to the convention, whose responsibilities will include, for instance, spelling and grammatical corrections and incorporating enacted amendments into the Constitution and Bylaws. All changes made by the Styles Committee shall be subject to approval by the NPC.

10. Except as provided in these Rules, the Constitution or the Bylaws, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern the proceedings of the Convention.
11. The Chair of each Convention plenary session shall be the sole interpreter of the Convention Rules. The administrative committee may provide for the appointment of a parliamentarian and such other assistants as needed to provide assistance as requested to convention chairs.
12. Any delegate or seated alternate may appeal any ruling of the Chair or of the Resolutions Committee to the Convention. In such instance, the person making the appeal may speak for up to two minutes to advocate the appeal and the Chair may speak for up to two minutes to defend the ruling. No other debate shall be permitted. The ruling of the Chair may be overturned by a vote in favor of the appeal by a majority of delegates and seated alternates present and voting. Challenges to a ruling by the chair shall be decided by majority vote of delegates present and voting.
13. The election for the NPC shall be conducted by preferential ballot. The Elections Committee shall count the ballots using an online voting system with a ranked-choice voting method. All ballots from which the voter's preference can be clearly determined shall be counted. Ballots are not secret, so if ballots are not correctly filled out, the Elections Committee will help delegates to correct them.
14. In the event that the Convention is at risk of not completing all necessary tasks, the Resolutions and Amendments Committee shall be responsible for proposing schedule changes to ensure that Convention completes its needed work.
15. Constitutional and Bylaws changes and resolutions will take effect only after the Convention Minutes have been approved by the NPC.

II.E. Registration, Housing and Travel

1. Convention registration will open Thursday, May 30 and close Monday, July 1st. All delegates, alternates, NPC members, observers and DSA officers attending are responsible for paying the Convention Fee, which includes breakfasts and lunches.
 - a. The regular registration fee is \$263. Those who register by Thursday, June 20 can pay an early-bird regular Convention rate of \$215.
 - b. Low-income members whose chapters cannot subsidize their registration may pay \$100, or if they register by Thursday, June 20 they may pay \$65.

2. Upon registration, each member will be given a link to book a hotel room directly through the hotel. Hotel booking too closes Monday, July 1st. The special rate for those attending the convention is \$159.31 per night or \$478 for three nights.
 - a. The room rate is the same for one, two, three or four persons in the room. Therefore, with roommates the room rate can be as low as \$39.83 per person per night or \$119.48 for three nights. In exceptional cases, DSA will be able to book a room and thus put in payment and possible subsidy up front.
3. The Administrative Committee will administer the travel share system. The travel share is designed so that delegates who travel long distances or live in communities with less affordable flight access have their costs subsidized by delegates who have lower costs, thus equalizing access. Actual fares (or mileage at \$0.58/mile for those who do not fly) will be averaged among all delegates, based on proof of payment or mileage calculation from point of origin. Those delegates and alternates whose intercity costs are lower than the average will pay the difference into the pool. Those delegates whose costs are higher than the average will be reimbursed for the difference, providing that they exercised reasonable diligence in their ticket purchase. Those who commute locally are also in the pool and will pay the average cost. All delegates and alternates must meet their obligation to the travel share before receiving and maintain their credentials for voting.
4. Any delegate whose chapter cannot afford to subsidize them may request a subsidy toward registration, housing or travel based on hardship, which will be considered by the Credentials Committee. Such requests must be submitted by June 23, 2019.