

# Bylaws of the Lubbock, Texas Local Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America

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## Article I. Name

The name of the Local Chapter is the Lubbock Local Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), also known as Lubbock DSA or LBK DSA, and referred to throughout this document as the Local Chapter. DSA is a not-for-profit corporation.

## Article II. Purpose

We are democratic socialists because we share a vision of a just, humane, and democratic society, and believe that this cannot be achieved within a capitalist system.

The disparity between those that work and those that use their wealth to make others work for them creates a class society that funnels wealth and power to the few, deprives the many of their political participation and creates artificial scarcity in the abundance of wealth.

We want workers to take control of the workplace so they, not capitalists, democratically decide who is to be a worker, what goods and services to provide, how those goods and services should be provided, and how to distribute profits. We want to abolish all classes and build a democratic socialist society.

We reject discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, disability status, age, religion, and national origin, and thus strive for a diverse membership to realize the equitable society we envision.

In the struggle of the many against the few, we aspire to organize the masses in order to achieve these goals by democratic and non-violent means.

Lubbock DSA aims to transform this situation by expanding working-class power in Lubbock, the South Plains, Texas, and beyond. This includes, but is not limited to, providing mutual aid, engaging in electoral politics, creating social bonds, fostering solidarity, educating the public on political issues, and raising class consciousness through collective struggle.

## **Article III. Membership**

### 3.1 Membership Definition

Members of Lubbock DSA will be those individuals whose dues to national DSA are paid in full and who reside and/or work in either Lubbock County or the eight (8) counties adjacent to Lubbock County (Lamb, Hale, Floyd, Hockley, Crosby, Terry, Lynn, Garza). Members in good standing will include all members of Lubbock DSA who are not currently suspended or terminated from the Local Chapter.

### 3.2 Membership Responsibilities

It will be the responsibility of members to approve policies and guidelines for the operation of the Local Chapter, elect Local Chapter officers and delegates to the national convention, vote on matters related to national policy, and to make recommendations on issues and other matters to the National Political Committee of DSA.

### 3.3 Voluntary Donations

As mandated by the national Constitution and Bylaws, the Local Chapter may establish a Local pledge system of voluntary donations for its members. The payment of a Local Chapter donation may not be a requirement for voting or for holding a Local Chapter office.

### 3.4 Resignation from Membership and Expulsion

- 3.4.a A member may resign from the Local Chapter by informing the Steering Committee.
- 3.4.b A member may resign from the national DSA by contacting DSA's national office. After resigning from the national, membership in the Local Chapter is forfeited.
- 3.4.c Expulsion of members is handled in accordance with Section 4.7.

## **Article IV. General Meetings**

### 4.1 Purpose

- 4.1.a General Meetings are the primary decision-making, legislative body for the Local Chapter. General Meetings set Local Chapter policy, work priorities, and ratify political positions.

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- 4.1.b In General Meetings, members acknowledge Working Groups and Branches.
- 4.1.c In General Meetings, members elect officers, delegates, recall officers, and fill vacant positions.
- 4.1.d In General Meetings, members ratify budgets, and hold the Steering Committee financially accountable.
- 4.1.e In General Meetings, members administer disciplinary procedures concerning fellow members.

### 4.2 Process

- 4.2.a General Meetings are held at least every six (6) months.
- 4.2.b General Meetings are called by the Steering Committee. Ten (10) percent of the total membership, yet at least five (5) members in good standing, may petition and thus mandate the Steering Committee to call a General Meeting. At a previous General Meeting, a successful motion to fix the time to adjourn mandates the Steering Committee to call a General Meeting for the respective date.
- 4.2.c The Steering Committee sends an invitation to all members at least three weeks prior to the General Meeting, including the date, location, and starting time. Notice may 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.
- 4.2.d At least one week before the meeting, the Steering Committee suggests an agenda to the membership and proposes standing rules for the respective General Meeting.
- 4.2.e The quorum for a General Meeting is 10% of all members, yet at least five (5) members, in good standing.
- 4.2.f At the beginning of the General Meeting, a member of the Steering Committee, the Presiding Officer of the Meeting, calls the meeting to order. After possible opening ceremonies, as adopted at a preceding general meeting, the Presiding Officer moves to adopt the standing rules for the respective General Meeting. The standing rules may designate a different Presiding Officer after adoption.
- 4.2.g Members are recognized by the Presiding Officer by raising their hand.
- 4.2.h The use of dated voting cards is to be preferred.

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### 4.3 Decision-Making

- 4.3.a Resolutions may, but need not, be submitted in writing to the Steering Committee two weeks prior to the meeting. They will be attached to the proposed agenda.
- 4.3.b Resolutions submitted in accordance with point 4.3.a do not need to be seconded.
- 4.3.c Amendments to the bylaws must be handled in accordance with Article XIII.

### 4.4 Acknowledging Working Groups and Branches

- 4.4.a Working Groups and Branches are acknowledged annually by a two-thirds majority vote. The respective group becomes a Working Group/Branch, and thus an official part of the Local Chapter, by being acknowledged. A ratified budget may allocate funds to the respective Working Group/Branch.
- 4.4.b In order to be (re)acknowledged, potential Working Groups must provide a Written Statement of Purpose prescribing the Working Group's activities, as well as stipulate their time frame and if they will exist on a permanent or temporary basis. It must be signed by at least five (5) members in good standing either intending to join or already active in the Working Group.
- 4.4.c In order to be (re)acknowledged, a potential Branch must provide evidence that it meets the respective requirements.

### 4.5 Elections and Recall

- 4.5.a Officers are elected on an annual basis.
- 4.5.b Members make nominations from the floor. Only nominees can be elected.
- 4.5.c Elections shall be held by ballot in accordance with the process as laid out by the parliamentary authority (Section 12.1) and the restrictions placed on elected positions (Article VI).
- 4.5.d Officers may be removed from office at the pleasure of the membership, in accordance with the procedure laid out by the parliamentary authority, by a two-thirds vote, a majority vote when previous notice has been given, or a vote of the majority of the entire membership.
- 4.5.e Vacant positions have to be filled at the consecutive General Meeting after the vacancy occurred. If the vacancy occurred less than one month

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before the General Meeting is held, then the position may be filled at the subsequent General Meeting instead.

### 4.6 Budget and Financial Accountability of Steering Committee

- 4.6.a Once a year the General Meeting will ratify a budget.
- 4.6.b The General Meeting may approve budget amendments.
- 4.6.c It is the task of the General Meeting to accept (or reject) audits of the Treasurer's annual financial report by the Auditing Committee.

### 4.7 Disciplinary Procedures against Members

- 4.7.a 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 found to be under the discipline of any democratic centralist organization, the Local Chapter may vote to expel them from Lubbock DSA.
- 4.7.b In order for such a finding to be made, another DSA member must formally prefer written charges against the member in question to the Steering Committee, which will set the date of a General Meeting for deliberations on the charges. The member in question must receive a copy of the written charges when or before the General Meeting is announced to the membership. Expulsion of a member requires a two-thirds vote of the General Meeting. An expelled member in good standing may appeal to the National Political Committee of DSA.

### 4.8 Emergency General Meetings

- 4.8.a The Local Chapter Steering Committee may call an Emergency General Meeting of the Local Chapter when an urgent and important matter requires deliberation. The provisions outlined under point 4.2.c remain unchanged, except that the invitation deadline is five (5) days.
- 4.8.b The deadline in point 4.2.d is changed to two (2) days for Emergency General Meetings.
- 4.8.c The deadline in point 4.3.a is changed to three (3) days.
- 4.8.d The urgency and importance of the meeting needs to be confirmed by a two-thirds majority at the beginning of the meeting.

## **Article V. Regular Meetings**

### 5.1 Purpose

Regular Meetings are the decision-making, legislative body for the Local Chapter subsidiary to General Meetings. Like General Meetings, they may set Local Chapter policy, work priorities, and ratify political positions. Regular Meetings may also approve budget amendments and fill vacant positions.

5.1.a Vacant officer positions may only be filled at a Regular Meeting, if the election was priorly announced in the proposed agenda. Points 4.5.b and 4.5.c apply.

### 5.2 Process, Powers, Restrictions

5.2.a The Steering Committee can call a meeting within a week and in doing so must publish a proposed agenda. The Working Groups, Branches, or five (5) individual members may initiate an Regular Meeting. They must make the Steering Committee aware of their Regular Meeting, and propose an agenda at least two (2) weeks in advance. The proposed agenda, location and meeting time must be publicly available at least one (1) week in advance.

5.2.b Regular Meetings are open to the public and need to be welcoming to potential new members.

5.2.c The quorum is 10% of all members, yet at least five (5) members, in good standing. Decisions made by the Regular Meeting may not contradict those made by the General Meeting and the General Meeting may overrule it without any restrictions. Minutes must be sent to the Secretary within a week, who then keeps and distributes them to the Local Chapter.

5.2.d The Local Chapter will hold Regular Meetings at least two (2) times annually. If this benchmark is not met, it needs to be discussed at a General Meeting.

## **Article VI. Local Chapter Officers: Powers and Duties**

### 6.1 Officers and Terms

6.1.a The officers of the Local Chapter will be two Co-Chairs, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Social Media Coordinator.

6.1.b Officers are elected in accordance with the rules laid out in Section 4.5.

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- 6.1.c Only members in good standing can hold office. No person shall hold multiple offices simultaneously. A member who holds a public office may not simultaneously be an officer of the Local Chapter.
- 6.1.d Nominees for office, unless they reject their nomination, must disclose their involvement with the carceral state (if any).

### 6.2 Co-Chairs

- 6.2.a The Co-Chairs will be the chief executive officers and official public spokespersons of the Local Chapter. They will preside over Steering Committee meetings.
- 6.2.b The Co-Chairs will initiate such actions and policies as the Local Chapter's general welfare may demand. The Co-Chairs will also be responsible for coordinating the day-to-day operations and political work of the Local Chapter's Branches and Working Groups.
- 6.2.c The Co-Chairs together have the power to distribute funds in accordance with the budget.
- 6.2.d At least one Co-Chair must not be a white male.

### 6.3 Secretary

- 6.3.a The Secretary will be responsible for answering all correspondence and queries of the Local Chapter and for maintaining an up-to-date membership list of the Local Chapter. They will ensure effective communication with national DSA. They will temporarily assume the responsibilities of the Co-Chairs, if neither Co-Chair is able to do so.
- 6.3.b The Secretary will be responsible also for taking minutes of General and Steering Committee Meetings, and will have custody of these minutes, the resolutions, reports, and other official records of the Local Chapter. They will transfer official records in good condition to their successor. Official records also include member lists and documents relating to the bylaws as specified in Article XIII.

### 6.4 Treasurer

- 6.4.a The Treasurer will be responsible for the legitimate distribution of funds and will maintain the financial records of the Local Chapter.

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- 6.4.b All funds collected by the Local Chapter will be turned over to the Treasurer, who will deposit them in a bank account under the name of the Local Chapter.
- 6.4.c In cooperation with the Secretary, the Treasurer will be responsible for ensuring that membership dues are paid up-to-date.
- 6.4.d The Treasurer will prepare the annual budget and deliver the financial report to the General Meeting, as well as periodic progress reports as requested by the Steering Committee.

### 6.5 Social Media Coordinator

The Social Media Coordinator will be responsible for managing social media communications and maintaining an active presence on social media.

### 6.6 Additional Duties

The Steering Committee may assign additional temporary duties to an officer of the Local Chapter, so long as such assignments do not conflict with the designation of responsibilities outlined in these Bylaws.

## **Article VII. Steering Committee**

### 7.1 Composition

The Local Chapter Steering Committee will be composed of the officers of the Local Chapter and the chair(s) of any Local Chapter Branches.

### 7.2 Powers and Duties

- 7.2.a The Steering Committee is the regular executive body of the Local Chapter, and thus subordinate to its Legislative bodies, i.e. the General and Regular Meetings. The Steering Committee administers the affairs of the Local Chapter, acts on the organization's behalf between Local Chapter meetings, oversees the implementation of the decisions made by the membership in those meetings, and performs such other duties as are specified in these bylaws. It may also propose policy to the General and Regular Meetings.
- 7.2.b The Steering Committee is responsible for having regular Regular Meetings and keeping the schedule of the General Meetings.
- 7.2.c The Steering Committee has the power to receive reports of any Committee or Branch and advise thereon.



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- 7.2.d The Steering Committee has the power to call Emergency General Meetings of the Local Chapter and to act on any matter that requires immediate and urgent action.
- 7.2.e The Steering Committee will appoint an Auditing Committee in due time before the Treasurer presents his/her annual financial report at a General Meeting; The Auditing Committee audits the Treasurer's annual financial report. The Auditing Committee consists of at least two (2) persons, who need not be members, and may not include the Treasurer.
- 7.2.f Care will be taken to protect the privacy of each member's contact information.

### 7.3 Meetings

- 7.3.a The meetings of the Steering Committee will be held at the call of one of the Co-Chairs at such intervals as may be determined by a prior Steering Committee Meeting or by consultation with any three (3) members of the Steering Committee. All members of the Steering Committee must (ordinarily) be given four (4) days oral, written, or electronic notice of regular Steering Committee Meetings; a 24-hour notice may be given under special emergency circumstances.
- 7.3.b Members may attend Steering Committee meetings, provided they do not interfere with the proceedings.
- 7.3.c The Secretary will distribute the minutes of the Steering Committee meetings within one (1) week to the membership.

### 7.4 Quorum

A quorum of at least half of the total number of members, including at least three (3) of the five (5) officers of the Steering Committee, is required for the transaction of business.

## **Article VIII. Branches**

- 8.1 A Branch is a subgroup of the Local Chapter consisting of at least five (5) members in good standing with national DSA. Branches may be defined by geography or language. The chairs of Branches will hold membership on the Local Chapter Steering Committee.
- 8.2 Branches have to be (re)acknowledged by the Local Chapter in accordance with Section 4.4.

8.3 Branches may have their own finances and bylaws. Those bylaws shall not conflict with the Local Chapter's bylaws.

8.4 Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) chapters within the geographic area defined by a DSA Local Chapter may affiliate as a branch of that Local Chapter, in which case the local YDSA chapter may send a representative to the Local Chapter Steering Committee.

## **Article IX. Committees**

9.1 Committees are defined in accordance with the parliamentary authority, RONR (11th ed.), §50:

“A committee [...] is a body of one or more persons, elected or appointed by (or by direction of) an assembly or society, to consider, investigate, or take action on certain matters or subjects, or to do all of these things. [...] Ordinary committees are of two types—standing committees (which have a continuing existence) and special committees (which go out of existence as soon as they have completed a specific task).”

9.2 As outlined in the parliamentary authority, committees may be appointed as follows:

9.2.a Election by ballot

9.2.b Nominations from the floor (open nominations) with viva-voce election

9.2.c Nominations by the chair

9.2.d Appointment by the chair

9.2.e Appointment by adoption of a motion naming members of a committee

9.3 In addition, committees may be appointed by the Steering Committee.

## **Article X. Working Groups**

10.1 Working Groups are official groups of members, that are not Committees, created for the purpose of achieving a set of common goals in accordance with the Purpose of the Bylaws. Working Groups can exist on a temporary or permanent basis.

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10.2 Working Groups have to be (re)acknowledged by the Local Chapter in accordance with Section 4.4. An Ad Hoc Working Group will dissolve automatically at the end of their predetermined working period.

10.3 Working Groups may have their own finances and bylaws. Those bylaws shall not conflict with the Local Chapter's bylaws.

## **Article XI. Delegates to National, Regional, and State Bodies**

### 11.1 Eligibility to Vote

Local Chapter delegates and alternates to the National Convention, as well as to any regional or state organizations, will be elected by members in good standing of the Local Chapter of DSA.

### 11.2 Schedule of Elections to National, Regional, or State Organizations

Elections for the National Convention delegation will be held on the schedule announced by the national DSA. Elections to regional or state organizations of DSA will be held on the schedule announced by those organizations.

### 11.3 Method of Voting

11.3.a Election of delegates follows the same procedure as the election of officers for the Local Chapter.

11.3.b Following Article V, Section 5 of national DSA's Constitution, delegates to the National Convention must be elected by secret ballot. And, "No election for delegates to the National Convention shall be held more than four (4) months, or less than forty-five (45) days, prior to the opening of the National Convention. No election for delegates shall be conducted before the apportionment of delegates."

11.3.c Following Article VI, Section 3 of national DSA's Bylaws, Local Chapters "may determine their own method of election of delegates to the Convention except that a petition from 10% of a Local Chapters membership or a motion supported by 15% of those present and voting at the Local Chapter meeting which determines the method of election will require the use of the Hare system in that Local Chapter's election of delegates to the National Convention."

## **Article XII. Parliamentary Authority, Special Rules, and Prohibited Activity**

### 12.1 Parliamentary Authority

The Rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 11th Edition, will govern this Local Chapter in cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws. Meetings must submit to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 11th Edition upon the request of a member.

### 12.2 Remote Meetings and Voting

At the discretion of the Steering Committee, (Emergency) General Meetings and Regular Meetings may be held remotely via audio or video conference in accordance with the Parliamentary Authority, RONR (11th ed.), p. 97 sqq. Steering Committee and Committee Meetings may also be held remotely. Branch and Working Group Meetings may be held remotely, unless their bylaws prescribe otherwise. Unless otherwise prescribed by the bylaws of the respective Branch or Working Group, the following rules apply:

- 12.2.a If an attending member objects to the meeting being held remotely, a vote on its dissolution is held before the adoption of standing rules. Such a motion succeeds with a simple majority. If the motion succeeds, the chair moves to fix the time to which to adjourn to an in-person meeting at a prescribed place. Thereafter the meeting is adjourned. The Secretary should give notice to the rest of the membership in due time.
- 12.2.b Standing rules should be passed at the beginning of a remote meeting, see RONR, (11th ed.), p. 98 sqq. Such rules also ought to prescribe the method of voting, which may be different from in-person meetings.
- 12.2.c Remote ballot votes and elections need to satisfy the same standards of secrecy and integrity as ordinary ballot votes.
- 12.2.d Except for General Meetings, individual members have the right to participate remotely in meetings of the above types.

### 12.3 Ballot Vote and Elections

- 12.3.a A member can force a vote to be held by ballot before the vote is held. Such a motion is a question of privilege. This rule can be suspended for a particular vote or for the duration of a meeting by a two-thirds majority.

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12.3.b Elections must always be held by ballot.

### 12.4 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when a matter to be acted upon by the Local Chapter or the Steering Committee confers a direct, substantial benefit to any Steering Committee member. The Steering Committee Member shall disclose the conflict in writing and it will be made public to the Local Chapter before the matter is discussed or voted on at a meeting. If the matter is before the Steering Committee only it shall be made public there before any discussion or vote may proceed. Chairpeople of Working Groups and Committees will be subject to the same Conflict of Interest disclosure requirements.

### 12.5 National DSA Requirements

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

### 12.6 Action Out of Order

Any action taken by a Steering Committee member or general member of the Local Chapter in contravention of these Bylaws is null and void.

### 12.7 Harassment Policy

The Local Chapter will follow the Harassment Policy of National DSA.

### 12.8 Appeals and Prohibition on Retaliation

Appeals of decisions made by the Steering Committee, the general membership or National Political Committee shall be conducted according to the rules and procedures laid out in the National DSA Constitution and Bylaws and the National DSA Harassment Policy. There shall be zero tolerance for retaliation for any action arising from use of this article, as stated in the National DSA Harassment Policy.

## **Article XIII. Amendments**

13.1 Proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be made by written resolution, endorsed by five (5) members of the Local Chapter and submitted to the

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Steering Committee at least two (2) weeks in advance of a General Meeting. As an independent body, the Steering Committee may propose amendments. Proposed amendments will be attached to the proposed agenda. Amendments require a two-thirds vote to be passed. The further procedure is laid out by the parliamentary authority.

- 13.2 Approved amendments are directly implemented in the bylaws on the day they become effective. Old versions of the bylaws and a log of changes to the bylaws must be kept by the Secretary.

### **Article XIV. Distribution of Assets**

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

