

***Baltimore County Progressive Democrats Club***  
***Bylaws***

Approved April 2023

## ***Baltimore County Progressive Democrats Club Bylaws***

### **1. Purpose**

- a. To work within the Democratic Party to advance progressive goals at the local, state, and federal level.
- b. To endorse and support progressive candidates for public office.
- c. To increase participation by progressives in the Democratic Party.
- d. To increase voter registration and turnout of progressives within the Democratic Party.
- e. To use progressive activism to ensure that the needs of the people in the community are heard by legislators and the media.
- f. To advance progressive causes by proposing and/or supporting legislation in the Maryland General Assembly and the Baltimore County Council.

### **2. Membership**

- a. Membership in the Baltimore County Progressive Democrats Club (BCPDC) is open to anyone in Baltimore County, Baltimore City, and adjacent portions of Harford, Howard, Carroll and Anne Arundel Counties who supports the Club's purposes.
- b. To be eligible to vote, members must have attended at least two of the previous four monthly meetings and pay such annual dues as shall be set by the Board of Directors for each calendar year.
- c. Upon notification to the Board, attendance requirements for voting shall be waived for legislators, councilmembers, and other elected officials and their support staff when said members are unable to attend due to fulfilling their official duties.

### **3. Committees**

- a. There are to be four Standing Committees: Strategy, Outreach, Policy, Communications. All Chairs of Standing Committees must be dues paying members. Duties of said committees may be changed by the Board of Directors. Committee duties are as follows:
  - i. Strategy Committee duties include but are not limited to:
    1. Seek out local talent to support in legislative races.
    2. Label contests of high value in which to become involved.
    3. Identify incumbents to be challenged.
    4. Create a viable strategic plan to achieve goals.
  - ii. Outreach Committee duties include but are not limited to:
    1. Engage with communities to better understand their concerns.
    2. Build connections with other Democratic/progressive groups in the region and state.
    3. Develop and coordinate outreach activities and encourage general membership participation.
    4. Compile and maintain community contact list.
  - iii. Policy Committee duties include but are not limited to:
    1. Work with the Strategy Committee to prepare a BCPDC platform statement prior to each election cycle.
    2. Present the platform statement to the general membership for approval. If the platform is not approved by at least 55% of the voting eligible members casting ballots, it will be returned to the Policy Committee for revision.

3. Identify issues affecting the community and develop suggested positions.
  4. Review legislation introduced in the Maryland General Assembly (MGA) and Baltimore County Council and develop suggested alterations as necessary.
  5. Conduct research upon formal request by another committee, the Board, or the general voting eligible membership.
  6. Identify legislation of interest to BCPDC.
- iv. Communications Committee duties include but are not limited to:
1. Social Media Management
  2. Website Management
  3. Writing and Sharing Press releases
- v. The Board is responsible for selecting Committee Chairs
1. The Committee Chair may select a Vice Chair.
- b. Duties of Committee Chairs may include but are not limited to:
- i. Set committee meeting time, location, agenda and rules, and chair meetings.
  - ii. Present committee report at each general membership meeting.
  - iii. Create ad-hoc committees.
  - iv. Review subcommittee reports to be included in the standing committee report.
  - v. Serve as full member of the Board of Directors.
- c. Committee membership is open to all dues paying members.

#### **4. Board of Directors and Officers**

- a. The Board shall consist of 9 voting members: the Chairs of each standing committee, the Treasurer, Secretary, Vice-President, President, and immediate past President.
- b. Elected officials may not make up more than 1/3 of the Board.
- c. Duties of the Board of Directors include but are not limited to:
- i. Set the agenda for general meeting.
  - ii. Review of finances.
  - iii. Assess overall direction and progress of the group.
- d. President
- i. The President sets the location of the general monthly meetings, in consultation with the Executive Committee. The location of the next meeting must be announced at the previous meeting, unless unusual circumstances require a late change of meeting location.
  - ii. Any meeting date or location changes must also be distributed to members via standard electronic methods at least 2 weeks prior to the original meeting date or the new meeting date, whichever is sooner.
  - iii. The President will set the agenda for the meeting. Anyone wishing to add an item to the agenda should contact the President no later than 48 hours before the meeting.

iv. The President chairs any Board meetings and General Membership meetings. In The President's absence the Board meetings and general membership meetings will be chaired in order of the line of succession described in section 4h.

e. Vice-President:

i. The Vice-President assists and advises the President.

ii. The Vice-President will chair any meetings for which the President is absent.

iii. The Vice-President will temporarily assume the duties of the Secretary or Treasurer if those officers are not present at a meeting.

f. Secretary:

i. The Secretary is responsible for recording minutes at any General Membership meeting.

ii. The Secretary will distribute meeting minutes by standard electronic methods no later than 48 hours prior to the following meeting.

iii. The Secretary shall maintain attendance records in order to establish that members meet the attendance requirements for voting.

g. Treasurer:

i. The Treasurer keeps the financial records of the Club and presents a Treasurer's report at every meeting.

ii. The Treasurer accepts and safeguards any donations to the Club.

iii. The Treasurer is responsible for filing any financial reports required by law.

iv. Members of the Board of Directors may be removed following a petition approved by 55% of voting eligible members.

h. Line of Succession of group leadership

When a sudden vacancy or absence in an office position arises, the line of succession for group leadership is President, Vice-President, Strategy Chair, Policy Chair, Secretary, Outreach Chair, Treasurer, Communications Chair, immediate past President.

i. Authorized Club Account Signatories

The following officers of the Baltimore County Progressive Democrats Club are hereby authorized to sign checks and other financial instruments on behalf of the Club: the President, the Vice President or the Treasurer. Should a vacancy occur in any of those offices, the vacancy shall be filled pursuant to Bylaw 5 and the name of each succeeding Club officer shall be noted in the minutes of the Club meeting at which the vacancy is filled.

## **5. Elections**

a. Executive Positions (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer)

i. All Executive positions must be filled by election from the voting eligible members. Voting may be in person at a general membership meeting or by secure electronic voting means.

ii. Election format shall be:

1. Self-nomination or acceptance of nomination by another member

2. Members may be nominated for more than one position but only elected to one.

3. Any person running for a Club Executive Position or nominating another person for a Club Executive Position must meet the requirements for voting eligibility as defined in these bylaws.
4. Nominees shall present their platform to the general group for consideration and questions.
5. In the event of in-person voting, when all nominees have presented, they must leave the immediate area for voting to commence.
6. Each member shall be counted as one vote. No member's vote shall count more than another's.
7. Voting will be by secret ballot. Voting may be in person by paper ballots or by secure electronic means.
8. The winner of any elected position is the nominee who receives the votes of 55% or more of the ballots cast, as long as a quorum exists as defined in section 7.c.
9. Ballots shall include an option to abstain or choose "None of the above".
10. In the event that no nominee receives the required number of votes, a revote shall immediately be called. Should a lack of required votes for a specific candidate continue, the voting process shall proceed to the next open position. Upon completion of all of the elections for all other vacant positions, a third vote for the previously undecided position shall take place. Should all candidates fail to reach the required vote threshold again, new elections for said position shall be held at the next general meeting. During the intervening time, the line of succession for officers shall be activated and followed. Previous nominees who failed to meet the required vote threshold three times may not participate in the new election for the same undecided position.

b. Terms for elective executive positions shall be two years in length, starting on January 1 of the year following the election.

c. Elections are held bi-annually at the final business meeting of an odd-number year in the event of in-person meetings and voting. If voting is by electronic means, the vote shall be timed to allow for announcement of the results at the final business meeting of the year.

## **6. Code of Conduct**

a. The BCPDC will not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their race, religion, age, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, place of origin, level of abilities or socio-economic status. Discrimination, bullying or harassment of any type shall not be tolerated. Any such behavior should be reported to the Board of Directors, which shall endeavor to resolve the issue.

b. Any potential conflict of interest should be reported to the Board of Directors. If the Board of Directors determines that a conflict of interest does exist, the Board will work with the member to achieve a solution.

c. Members shall not share publicly another member's personal information, without that member's permission. This includes information on personal situations, health issues, family situations, and candidacies not yet publicly announced.

## **7. General Membership Meetings**

a. General Membership Meetings will typically be held the fourth Thursday of each month from 7-9 PM unless the board determines otherwise on adequate notice.

- b. Meetings which fall on or around a holiday may be rescheduled on an alternate date or may be cancelled.
- c. Quorum requirements for voting purposes
  - i. In the event of in-person voting, at least 25% of voting-eligible members as defined in section 2.d, or a minimum of 10 voting-eligible members, whichever is less, must be present for any vote or election. If the minimum number of members is not present at a meeting, any votes must be delayed until the following meeting.
  - ii. In the event of electronic voting, 25% of voting-eligible members as defined in section 2.d, or a minimum of 10 voting-eligible members, whichever is less, must cast their electronic ballots to constitute a valid election.
- d. Special meetings may be convened by the Board of Directors with adequate notice given to all members.

## **8. Political Endorsements**

- a. The Strategy Committee shall develop a candidate questionnaire that reflects the Club platform and share its report with the membership.
- b. Following the report, a vote of the general membership will be taken. Any candidate approved by at least 51% of the votes cast will be endorsed by the Club. Ballots for endorsements elections must include a line to vote for "None of the above".
- c. The Club may endorse candidates up to the number of positions available for that district or election.
- d. The Club may endorse ballot questions.
- e. Endorsements may be withdrawn for malfeasance, or a change of the candidate's platform from the previously stated positions. Emergency withdrawal of endorsement may be decided by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, as long as said action is brought to the general membership's attention for approval vote at the next meeting.
- f. The Club may only endorse Democratic candidates except in the case of non-partisan races.
- g. The Club may choose not to endorse for any ballot line or ballot question.
- h. The Club may endorse during the primary.
- i. The Club may endorse primary opponents to Democratic incumbents, as long as such opponents are also Democrats.
- j. Any member may choose to personally support or oppose any candidate, whether endorsed by the Club or not, but members may not misrepresent their position as being the position of the Club.

## **9. Fiscal Year**

The Fiscal Year of the Club is January 1 to December 31 of each year.

## **10. Amendments**

- a. Amendments to the Bylaws must be submitted in writing for consideration to the Board of Directors. Proposed amendments must be sponsored by any Board member or a minimum of two dues paying general members.
- b. Approval of a proposed amendment requires a 2/3 majority of Board members.

- c. Once approved by the Board of Directors, the proposed amendment is presented to the general members at the next general meeting for debate.
- d. Following debate, a vote must take place to accept or reject the proposed amendment.
- e. The proposed amendment shall be approved by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority of the votes cast by voting-eligible members.
- f. Accepted amendments shall immediately be added to the BCPDC Bylaws by the Club Secretary.

**11. Dissolution**

- a. The Club may be dissolved by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote of the Board of Directors.
- b. A dissolution vote may be taken via electronic means if the Board of Directors is unable to assemble a quorum.
- c. In the event of dissolution, any remaining funds in the treasury will be donated to progressive groups or causes, to be selected by vote of the Board of Directors at the time of dissolution.

**12. Club Operations during a Public Health or Safety Emergency**

Upon 10 days advance notice, the Board may declare a public health or safety emergency that necessitates the temporary suspension of any provision of these Bylaws that govern member eligibility to vote or voting procedures for Board elections or candidate endorsements. The notice shall specify the reasons for the declaration, identify each Bylaw provision that the Board is proposing to suspend, and propose temporary alternative procedures to be used during the emergency. The temporary procedures shall go into effect 10 days after the date of the notice, unless a majority of the voting membership shall object by written communication to the Board, which objection shall state the reasons for any objection. Following such objections, the Board can modify or withdraw any proposed temporary procedure. Alternatively, the Board may finalize the temporary procedures without modification. If the Board chooses to finalize the temporary procedures, it must respond to any objections by stating its reasons for finalizing the temporary procedures notwithstanding any objections. Any temporary procedures adopted hereto shall remain in effect for a period stated by the Board, not to exceed 12 months. The Board can extend the effective period for no more than an additional 6-month period, upon 30 days' notice to the membership.

**13. These bylaws approved on April 27, 2023 shall supersede any and all bylaws or amendments thereto previously approved.**



Secretary, Baltimore County Democrats Club  
April 27, 2023