

Bylaws of the Lancaster County Democratic Party

**As Proposed by the Bylaws Committee
2026**

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Preamble

The Lancaster County Democratic Party, hereafter referred to as the “County Party,” recognizes the basic worth of all people and does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disabilities, ethnic background or cultural heritage. The purpose of the County Party is to serve the public interest by providing the ongoing structure to ensure the election of Democrats to both partisan and nonpartisan offices; to retain and recruit Democrats and encourage potential candidates for public office; and to provide our membership with a forum on matters of political interest. The County Party also provides education and training. The intention of the County Party is to approach its tasks with integrity and honor and to involve as many people as possible in the process. The goal of the County Party is to build a Party whose strength is in its solidarity.

1. The Lancaster County Democratic Convention

1.1. **Definition.** The Lancaster County Democratic Party Convention, hereinafter referred to as “County Convention,” as constituted and empowered by state law and the bylaws and rules of the Nebraska Democratic Party and Democratic National Committee is the body that directs and controls the County Party organization.

1.2. **Authority.** The County Convention’s authority shall be supreme in relationship to the power of the County Party officers, hereinafter provided for.

1.2.1. After the adjournment of the County Convention, the direction and control of the County Party organization shall be vested in the Central Committee.

1.2.2. In the absence of a convened quorum of the Central Committee, the Executive Committee shall have direction and control as defined in Section 3.

1.3. **Organization.** The organization and temporary rules of the County Convention and the appointment of all Convention Committee chairs shall be determined by the County Chair with the approval of the Central Committee.

1.3.1. Delegates shall register in accordance with the method adopted by the Central Committee conforming to the requirements by the Nebraska Democratic Party and the Democratic National Committee.

1.4. **Quorum.** Forty Percent (40%) of the registered delegates shall constitute a quorum to convene the County Convention. The quorum, once established, shall stand for the remainder of the Convention.

1.5. **Convention Business.** The County Convention shall accomplish the following business in an order determined by the agenda.

1.5.1. Enact rules of the convention.

1.5.2. Elect County Convention Officers

1.5.3. Elect County Party Officers,

1.5.4. Elect Members of the Central Committee who are:

1.5.4.1. Eligible persons who are willing to serve on the Central Committee shall complete a form stating their intent to serve along with contact and other necessary information.

1.5.4.2. The nominees shall be presented for approval by majority vote of the convention.

1.5.5. Elect delegates and alternates to the Nebraska Democratic State Convention as provided by the Nebraska Democratic Party.

1.5.6. Consider and act upon any proposed bylaws amendments

1.5.7. Consider other business as may come before it.

1.6. **County Convention Officers.** The County Chair or their designee shall temporarily preside over the County Convention until the election of the following County Convention officers:

1.6.1. Convention Chair, who shall preside over the County Convention.

1.6.2. Convention Secretary, who shall take minutes and records all official acts of the convention.

1.6.3. Sergeant at Arms, who shall maintain order during the convention and assist in other duties as assigned by the Convention Chair.

1.7. County Convention Committees. Prior to the convening of each County Convention, the Chair of each Convention Committee shall be appointed by the County Chair with the approval of the Central Committee.

1.7.1. **The Planning Committee.** The Planning Committee shall assist the County Chair with logistical arrangements in preparation for the County Convention. It will also review and recommend the rules and order of business to be adopted by the County Convention and shall file such recommendations with the Convention Secretary.

1.7.2. **The Credentials Committee.** The Credentials Committee shall prepare and file the names and addresses of all delegates duly elected to the County Convention. Determine the qualification of any registered delegates to be seated by the County Convention in accordance with the Nebraska Democratic Party requirements.

1.7.3. **The Nominations Committee.** The Nominations Committee shall oversee all aspects of the election including nomination, and the counting of votes. Persons interested in declaring as a candidate for any County Party Officer shall contact the Chair of the Nominations Committee by the deadline of fourteen days in advance of the Convention. However, nomination of candidates may be received from the floor at the appropriate time. The Executive Committee Officers shall each be elected by a majority vote of those present and voting at the County Convention. The order of election shall be Chair, Vice Chair, Second Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

1.7.4. **The Bylaws Committee.** The Bylaws Committee shall review and recommend changes to the Bylaws to be adopted by the County Convention and file such recommendations with the Convention Secretary.

1.8. **Adjournment.** The County Convention may be adjourned only by a majority vote of those present and voting.

2. The Central Committee

2.1. **Definition.** The Central Committee shall be composed of the elected County Party officers, Central Committee members elected at convention or otherwise elected under these Bylaws (collectively referred to herein as “Central Committee members”).

2.1.1. All Democratic elected officials who represent part or all of Lancaster County, and all Democratic candidates who are running for a district that encompasses all or part of Lancaster County shall be ex officio non-voting members of the Central

Committee. Nothing in this subsection prevents an elected official or candidate from being a full voting member

2.2. Authority. When the County Convention is not in session, the Central Committee shall:

- 2.2.1. Meet at least monthly, excluding the month of December and the month the County Convention is held.
- 2.2.2. Have the direction and control of the County Party Organization.
- 2.2.3. Determine, set, and formulate the politics of the County Party as set forth in the County Party Bylaws and Standing Rules.
- 2.2.4. Deal with issues that require action by the County Party organization
- 2.2.5. Have the power to overrule an action of the County Chair or the Executive Committee by a majority vote.
- 2.2.6. Have the power to amend, by a 2/3rds vote, the Bylaws on matters governing the operation of the Central Committee itself as provided in bylaw 8.1.
- 2.2.7. Have the power to establish rules, procedures and policies to govern itself effectively and to carry out the duties of the County Party organization.

2.3. Duties and Responsibilities of Individual Members of the Central Committee. It is the duty and responsibility of a Central Committee Member to conduct activity consistent with the purpose of the County Party organization. Requirements to serve as a member on the Central Committee are to be a registered Democrat residing in Lancaster County and abide by the rules and bylaws governing the Lancaster County Democratic Party.

- 2.3.1. Voting members of the Central Committee of the Lancaster County Democrats shall participate in a minimum of 2 of the following:
 - 2.3.1.1. Participate actively in County Party functions as a member of a subcommittee;
 - 2.3.1.2. Take an active role in county party activities helping elect Democrats to office in Lancaster County by running for office, helping on campaigns, and/or recruiting others to do the same.

- 2.3.1.3. Be a monetary donor to the Lancaster County Democratic Party.
- 2.3.1.4. Attend all regularly scheduled Central Committee meetings or be excused in advance by the Chair.
- 2.4. **Quorum.** Forty Percent (40%) of the members of the Central Committee shall constitute a quorum. Once reached, a quorum shall be in effect until adjournment. When a quorum shall not be present, the Central Committee members may continue to meet as an advisory committee to the Executive Committee.
- 2.5. **Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Central Committee may be called by the County Chair, or by a petition of 25 percent of the members of the Central Committee. Members of the Central Committee must be notified no less than five days prior to such a meeting and be provided with an agenda.
- 2.6. **Nominating Additional Central Committee Members.** When the convention is not in session the Central Committee may nominate and elect additional members of the Central Committee. Candidates meeting the requirements to serve on the Central Committee and have attended at least two consecutive meetings may be seated by a vote of the central committee.
 - 2.6.1. The attendance requirements may be waived by a two-thirds vote of the central committee.
- 2.7. **Removal of Members of the Central Committee.** A member of the Central Committee who fails in their duties may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the central committee.
 - 2.7.1. Notice of impending dismissal must be given to the person in question no less than fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the vote.
 - 2.7.2. Central Committee members who have two consecutive unexcused absences are deemed automatically removed from the Central Committee.
 - 2.7.3. Any member who was removed automatically may, upon their return to the Central Committee, be granted the opportunity to appeal to the Central Committee and explain their absences and may be reinstated upon a vote of the Central Committee

- 2.7.4. Prior to adjourning each regularly scheduled Central Committee, the Secretary shall identify those inactive Central Committee members whose removal from the Central Committee for non-compliance with these Bylaws will be voted upon at the subsequent Central Committee meeting and report in the minutes any members automatically removed because of two consecutive unexcused absences

3. The Executive Committee

- 3.1. **Definition.** The Executive Committee is composed of the officers of the County Party and the committee chairs who are non-voting members.
- 3.2. **Authority.** The Executive Committee can act on behalf of the Central Committee on those matters requiring action but where convening a Central Committee meeting would be impractical, providing that such actions be presented for ratification at the next Central Committee meeting.
- 3.3. **Officers of the County Party.** The officers of the County Party are the Chair, Vice Chair, Second Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- 3.4. **Terms of Office.** The terms of the County Party Officers begin with the adjournment of the County Convention and continue until the next biennial County Convention unless by resignation or removal.
 - 3.4.1. If any county party officer becomes a candidate under state law for elected office in the State of Nebraska and they are running against another Democrat in good standing with the Central Committee, they shall take a leave of absence from their duties related to the county party office, until such a time that they no longer have a Democratic opponent.
- 3.5. **Duties and Responsibilities.** County Party Officers must attend or be excused in advance at all regularly scheduled Central Committee meetings and Executive Committee meetings.
 - 3.5.1. The Executive Committee shall create a strategic plan including an annual budget to be presented and approved by the Central Committee.
 - 3.5.2. The Executive Committee shall arrange for implicit bias training and harassment training that shall be on the agenda for Central Committee meeting in the first six months of odd numbered years.

3.5.3. Duties of the Chair.

3.5.3.1. Establish such sub-committees as appropriate.

3.5.3.2. Appoint the chairs of the sub-committees with the approval of the Central Committee.

3.5.3.2.1. The chair may not appoint anyone to chair a subcommittee who is also a county party officer, except on a temporary basis.

3.5.3.3. Supervise the organizing and conducting of the County Convention and meetings of the Central Committee, including appointment of temporary presiding officials of the County Convention.

3.5.3.4. Preside at meetings of the Central and Executive Committees.

3.5.3.5. Direct day-to-day activities and messaging of the County Party organization; however, the Chair shall take no action contrary to any specific directive of the County Convention or Central Committee.

3.5.3.6. Represent the County Party under authority and direction of the Central Committee.

3.5.3.7. Set the time and place of the Central Committee and Executive Committee meetings each month.

3.5.3.8. Assign duties to Executive Committee Officers as needed

3.5.4. **Duties and Requirements of the Vice Chair.** The Vice Chair must be a different gender than the Chair.

3.5.4.1. Serve as representatives of the Executive Committee at Standing Committee meetings as assigned by the Chair.

3.5.4.2. Fulfill other duties as assigned by the Chair.

3.5.5. **Duties and Requirements of the Second Vice Chair.** The Second Vice Chair may be of any gender.

3.5.5.1. Serve as representatives of the Executive Committee at Standing Committee meetings as assigned by the Chair.

3.5.5.2. Fulfill other duties as assigned by the Chair.

3.5.6. Duties of the Secretary.

3.5.6.1. Keep the minutes of the Executive and Central Committee meetings.

3.5.6.2. Maintain a list of the current Central Committee members and their attendance.

3.5.6.3. Make provisions for retaining records for reference and historical purposes in a way that is accessible to current and future members of the County Party.

3.5.6.4. Fulfill other duties as assigned by the Chair.

3.5.7. Duties of the Treasurer

3.5.7.1. Keep and disperse the funds of the County Party, as directed by the Central Committee.

3.5.7.2. Assumes the fiduciary responsibility of prudent handling of County party funds and ensure that these monies are not commingled with other accounts.

3.6. Vacancies, Removals and Replacements of Officers

3.6.1. In the event that the position of County Chair is vacant the next highest officer position that is not vacant shall serve as acting chair until the position of County Chair is filled.

3.6.2. If an office of the County Party becomes vacant, notice shall be given to the Central Committee at the next regularly scheduled meeting. At the meeting the month after the vacancy is announced, the Central Committee shall then accept nominations and elect a replacement to serve the remainder of the term of office. A majority vote is necessary to be elected as an officer of the County Party.

3.6.3. If any officer of the County Party fails to attend to the duties of office, notice of impending dismissal will be given in writing to the person no less than fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the vote. That person's position may then be declared vacant by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Central Committee members.

4. Subcommittees.

4.1. **Special Committees.** Special Committees only meet when necessary.

4.1.1. **Audit Committee.** The Audit Committee shall consist of three members appointed by the Chair, and approved by the Central Committee, to examine the books no less than biennially and whenever there is a transfer of records.

4.1.1.1. The committee shall report its findings at a regularly scheduled Central Committee meeting in the first six months of a new Central Committee and at the first Central Committee meeting after completion of an audit following a transfer of records.

4.1.2. **Review Committee.** The review committee is the primary investigative body of the Lancaster County Democratic Party. It shall be convened to investigate and recommend action with respect to party officers, and Central Committee members in accordance with Review Committee procedures

4.1.2.1. **Composition.** This committee shall be composed of the County Party Chair, the Vice Chair, and five additional members, at least one of whom is a minority as defined by the DNC, and at least one who is not a member of the Central Committee and be gender diverse. Anyone under review shall not participate on the Review Committee.

4.1.2.2. The purpose of the Review Committee is to provide a mechanism to discipline County Party Officers and Central Committee members whose actions undermine the election of Democrats or other actions that undermine the County Party, including but not limited to; members who publicly endorse candidates who are not registered Democrats and who are running against a candidate who is a registered Democrat.

4.1.2.3. The Review Committee has the authority to recommend censure or removal of Officers and Central Committee members.

4.1.2.4. **Convening the Review Committee.** Any Central Committee member may request that the Review Committee be convened and upon such a request a majority vote of the Central Committee or the Executive Committee shall convene the Review Committee.

4.1.2.4.1. Discussion by the Central Committee or Executive Committee of such a request must be conducted in executive session with non-members excluded.

4.1.2.4.2. All recommendations made by the Review Committee shall be presented at a Central Committee meeting. Approval of any recommendations for censure, or removal shall require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all members present and voting.

4.2. **Standing Subcommittees.** The Chair of each Standing Committee shall be appointed by the County Chair. All members of the Central Committee should serve on at least one standing committee. Each Standing Committee shall issue a report of its activities as necessary at Central Committee meetings.

4.2.1. **Campaign Services Committee.** The Campaign Services Committee is responsible for helping to recruit candidates for elected office in Lancaster County and coordinating services with those campaigns.

4.2.1.1. Conduct events and coordinate services and resources for candidates, elected officials, potential candidates for public office, and ballot question campaigns in Lancaster County.

4.2.1.2. Review, research, and vetting specific ballot question campaigns and making recommendations to the Central Committee.

4.2.2. **Fundraising Committee.** The Fundraising Committee shall be responsible for generating revenue for the County Party.

4.2.2.1. Host at least one fundraiser per quarter, including the annual Patriots Dinner.

4.2.2.2. Be in charge of recruiting sustaining donors to the Party.

4.2.3. **Membership and Outreach Activities Committee.** The Membership and Outreach Committee shall be responsible for maintaining and developing membership for the County Party organization.

4.2.3.1. Host social events or fora on relevant political issues and coordinate party outreach at community events.

- 4.2.3.2. The Committee shall be responsible for establishing recommended guidelines to encourage participation by groups underrepresented in Democratic politics and work to make available tools and resources to assist in accomplishing the County Party's diversity and outreach efforts.

4.2.4. **Technology and Digital Integration Committee.** The Technology and Digital Integration Committee shall maintain and evaluate the technological needs of the County Party and provide. The committee shall maintain the county party's operation of its electronic presence, voter file management, and provide related technical training as necessary.

4.3. **Ad Hoc Subcommittees.** Additional committees may be established for a specific purpose and a defined period of time by appointment of the County Chair, County Convention, or Central Committee.

5. Support of Candidates

5.1. The primary purpose of the County Party is to elect effective Democrats to partisan and non-partisan offices in Lancaster County. The County Party will provide support in appropriate forms to Democrats running for office.

5.2. Party resources are those materials, physical or intellectual, that are produced by the Lancaster County Democratic Party or on its behalf or at its request and which are funded by the Lancaster County Democratic Party.

5.3. Endorsement. Endorsement by the County Party means the public recommendation of a candidate running for electoral office.

5.3.1. Candidate(s) receiving County Party endorsement.

- A sole Democrat in a race will receive the endorsement of the Party.
- Multiple non-incumbents in a race will receive Co-Equal Endorsement.
- An incumbent will receive the sole endorsement of the Party unless a challenger petitions the Party to remain neutral in the race. Such a race, hereafter called a Challenged Race, the candidates will be interviewed by the Endorsement Committee, which will make a recommendation to the Central Committee as to 'Sole Incumbent Endorsement' or 'Co-equal Endorsement' of all candidates. See Section 5.5.
- In extraordinary circumstances, a sole candidate may be evaluated by the Endorsement Committee whether to withhold Party endorsement and/or resources. See Section 5.6.

- In a race with no endorsed Democrat candidate, a non-Democrat can be endorsed with a 2/3 vote of the Central Committee.

5.3.2. Endorsement does not mean the equitable use of party resources.

5.4. The Endorsement Committee shall be formed prior to each election cycle and consists of the following members:

5.4.1. The Chair of the Party, unless they are running for office during the cycle being evaluated.

5.4.2. The Vice Chair of the Party, unless they are running for office during the cycle being evaluated.

5.4.3. The Chair of the Campaigns Committee, unless they are running for office during the cycle being evaluated.

5.4.4. A member appointed by the Chair and confirmed by the Central Committee who is an elected official and who is not running for office during the cycle being evaluated.

5.4.5. A member appointed by the Chair and confirmed by the Central Committee who is a minority as defined by the DNC who is not running for election during the cycle being evaluated.

5.4.6. If any of the above members are ineligible due to candidacy in the election cycle, the Chair shall appoint a replacement subject to confirmation by the Central Committee.

5.5. Duties of the Endorsement Committee in a Challenged Race. In a Challenged Race with a Democrat incumbent and one or more Democrat challengers the candidates will be evaluated by the Endorsement Committee, who will recommend [1] ‘Sole Incumbent Endorsement’ or [2] ‘Co-equal Endorsement’.

5.5.1. The Endorsement Committee shall use due diligence to separately interview the candidates.

5.5.2. The Endorsement Committee shall meet as soon as possible after the determination that there is a Challenged Race. The cutoff date for making this determination is one month before the date the Election Office posts its initial

Vote-By-Mail ballots. The purpose is to give the Endorsement Committee time to perform its duties, the Central Committee to receive the recommendation, and then for the County party to prepare distribution materials. If this is not a Challenged Race by the cutoff date, the incumbent receives ‘Sole Incumbent Endorsement’.

5.5.3. Should the incumbent refuse to an in-person interview, endorsement is deemed ‘Co-equal Endorsement’. Should the challenger refuse to an in-person interview, endorsement is deemed “Sole Incumbent Endorsement”.

5.5.4. The Committee shall evaluate the candidates using the following criteria:

- If the candidate is an incumbent Democrat who has effectively represented the party and its values while serving in office.
- If the candidate has been an active Democrat.
- If the challenger is prepared to run a legitimate campaign, considering that a contested Primary will raise costs for the incumbent, using funds that could otherwise target the Republican opponent.
- If the candidate’s campaign organization is dominated by and supported by other political parties in conflict with the values of the Democratic Party.
- If the candidate takes votes or positions that are egregious and contrary to the deeply held values of the Lancaster County Democratic Party
- If the candidate has failed to report their financial status to the Federal Election Commission or the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission.
- If the candidate has committed a heinous act, including but not limited to, substantiated criminal charges or convictions.
- Other relevant information provided to or obtained by the Committee.

5.5.5 The Committee will attempt to confirm the validity of any false statements or fabrications brought up in the interviews.

5.5.6. The Committee shall consider the value of incumbency, i.e., may this Democrat incumbent be more likely to win because of incumbency. The Committee shall evaluate ‘value of incumbency’ for the incumbent using the following criteria:

- Name Recognition: The incumbent may gain visibility and familiarity from their years of service.
- Low-Risk Signaling: The incumbent may be viewed by voters as familiar and less risky than a challenger who has not yet been tested.

- Quality Indicator: The incumbent's past electoral wins may imply their competence and effectiveness.
- Casework Advantage: The incumbent may be able to leverage their experience to address constituent concerns more effectively than the challenger, such as navigating bureaucratic processes effectively
- Funding Advantage: The incumbent's experience may improve their ability to secure resources for public projects.
- Campaign Advantage: The incumbent may have an existing campaign organization and a well-established supporter base that will enhance the chances of winning.
- Fundraising Expertise: The incumbent's experience in office may enhance access to donors and facilitate additional fundraising opportunities.
- Media Access: The incumbent may have better access to media to showcase their records and policy.
- "Scare-Off" Effect: The incumbent may be perceived as difficult to beat, keeping challengers from another party from entering the race, leaving the incumbent to face weaker opposition.
- Other relevant information provided to or obtained by the Committee.

5.6. Withholding Endorsement and/or Resources.

Under certain circumstances party endorsement and/or resources may be withheld from a candidate or elected official who is a Democrat. These circumstances may include, but shall not be limited to a candidate or elected official who:

- Has not been an active Democrat
- Whose campaign organization is dominated by and supported by other political parties
- Whose votes or positions are egregious and contrary to the deeply held values of the Lancaster County Democratic Party
- Who has failed to report their financial status to the Federal Election Commission or the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission, or
- Who has committed a heinous act, including but not limited to, substantiated criminal charges or convictions

5.6.1 Party endorsement and/or resources may only be withheld upon a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote by the Central Committee.

5.7 Interview Framework / Committee Recommendation

5.7.1. The Committee will conduct thoughtful and deliberative interview promptly and respectfully in closed session.

5.7.2. For a Challenged Race, the Committee shall prepare a recommendation, decided by majority vote, either to 'Sole Incumbent Endorsement' or 'Co-equal Endorsement'.

5.7.3 For an extraordinary circumstance (Section 5.6), the Committee shall prepare a recommendation, decided by majority vote, either 'Endorsement' or 'No Endorsement'.

5.8 Action of the Central Committee.

5.8.1 The Endorsement Committee recommendation is submitted to the Central Committee and is considered officially approved unless amended by a 2/3 majority of the Central Committee. Upon approval of the Central Committee, the endorsement becomes effective immediately.

5.9 Party Officials

5.9.1 In order to prevent the actual or appearance of unfair advantage County Party Officers shall maintain strict neutrality in an election contest with more than one Democrat.

Provision: Changes to Section 5 do not take effect until Dec. 1, 2026

6 Official Acts

6.1 Business transacted at the County Convention in accordance with the official rules then in force shall be the official acts of the Lancaster County Democratic Party.

6.2 Beyond the acts of the County Convention, only the Central Committee of the County Party shall have the authority to determine official acts and positions of the County Party.

6.3 At no time shall any other individual or body, no matter how constituted, be authorized to represent, or to hold itself to represent the Lancaster County Democratic Party.

6.4 All physical and digital resources created for the Lancaster County Democratic Party by its officers is the property of the LCDP and should be maintained and transferred upon any change of officers.

7 Parliamentary Authority

- 7.1 All questions of parliamentary procedure shall be determined in accordance with the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, except as may be provided by these Bylaws, or by resolution of the Central Committee or County Convention.

8 Amendments

- 8.1 These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the delegates present and voting at the County Convention, with a quorum established, or by the Central Committee on matters pertaining to its own governance, as provided by these Bylaws. Proposed amendments shall follow the election of Convention officers and officials, and the adoption of Convention rules. Once approved, the adoption of amendments shall be effective immediately.

9 Dissolution

- 9.1 The County Party may be dissolved according to the laws of the State of Nebraska. In the event of dissolution, an audit shall take place, after which all remaining money, items and equipment shall pass to the Nebraska Democratic Party.