



The Bylaws of the Democratic Executive Committee of Sarasota County

Preamble

In regular meeting, **April 10, 2024**, the members of the Democratic Executive Committee of Sarasota County (DECSC) hereby adopted the following Bylaws with amendments to control the operation of said DEC.

In accordance with the Florida Democratic Party, the DECSC encourages full participation of our members, without discrimination on grounds of race, color, creed, sex, age, religion, economic status, ethnic identity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identities and expression.

Article I Name

The name of this political party shall be the Democratic Party of Sarasota County, which may also be referred to as SCDP: Sarasota County Democratic Party.

Article II Governing Body

The governing body of the Democratic Party of Sarasota County shall be the Democratic Executive Committee of Sarasota County, hereinafter referred to as the DECSC.

Article III Creation and Authority

The DECSC is the organization charged by the Florida Democratic Party with the responsibility for conducting Florida Democratic Party affairs within Sarasota County. The Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party shall govern the DECSC, along with these Bylaws.—The FDP Charter and Bylaws and the Florida Statutes shall prevail in the case of a conflict with the DECSC Bylaws and shall govern in all cases to which the DECSC Bylaws do not speak (Article 5, Section 5, FDP Charter.)

Article IV Membership

The DECSC membership is composed of Democrats registered in Sarasota County and has two membership categories. Category I memberships are defined in Florida



Statutes and the Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party and are recognized by the Supervisor of Elections.

A. Category I Members

Category I members include persons Elected, “Appointed” by DECSC Election, and Automatic members.

1.1 Elected Members

Elected members are those Democrats elected to the office of Precinct Committee Person on the ballot in the Florida primary election in a presidential election year, after having submitted a Candidate Oath form to the Supervisor of Elections office (SOE) by the preceding June deadline.

Privileges: These members shall enjoy voting rights and all privileges of membership.

Term: These members shall take office the first day of the month (December 1) following each presidential general election and shall serve a term of four years.

Process: In addition to the Candidate Oath, these members must complete the Florida Democratic Party Loyalty Oath and be sworn in at a DECSC meeting. These members are expected to attend a Precinct Committee Person orientation before or after being elected.

1.2 “Appointed” via Election by the DECSC

The DECSC may fill a Precinct Committee Person vacancy with a person who has been a registered Democrat for at least one year who resides in that precinct.

Privileges: These members shall enjoy voting rights and all privileges of membership.

Term: They shall serve a term of up to four years. *To continue in office*, they will submit a Candidate Oath as required by the Supervisor of Elections by the June deadline preceding the primary in a presidential election year.

Process: Persons who wish to be elected in this way must contact an Area Leader or the Precinct Organization Chair of the Sarasota County Democratic Party to begin the process. They are required to: attend a DECSC meeting; complete the Candidate Oath form required by the Supervisor of Elections; complete the Florida Democratic Party Loyalty Oath; be elected by majority vote of the DECSC; and take the oath of office at their second DECSC meeting.

1.3 Special At Large status

This position shall be created for an incumbent elected Precinct Committeeman or Precinct Committeewoman who moves into a precinct where no vacancy exists in that office. The number of these At Large members shall not be included in the number of appointed members to which the DECSC is entitled. These members shall enjoy voting rights and all privileges of membership.



1.4 Automatic Members. Automatic members are those persons who are:

1. Elected Democratic officials within Sarasota County.
2. Presidents of Democratic Clubs or Caucuses chartered through the DECSC and by the Florida Democratic Party.
3. Members by virtue of the Florida Statutes (elected officials including FDP officers serving outside the county but residing in the county)

Term: These members shall take office on the date their official term begins and as long as they hold the office on which membership on the DECSC is based.

Privileges: Automatic members shall serve at large and shall enjoy voting and other privileges of membership, except they shall not be officers of the DECSC, unless they are also an elected member as defined in these Bylaws, nor shall they vote on the question of whether a special meeting shall be called. See Article VII, Section C below.

Automatic Members do not have attendance requirements and are not counted in the quorum. (Per FDP pg 24 1.2.2)

B. Category II Members

“At Large” and Honorary membership is recognized only within the Bylaws of this organization.

1. At Large Appointed Members.

Appointed members are those persons who are appointed by the Chair of the DECSC to serve At Large. Because At Large Category II membership is recognized only within the Bylaws of this organization, a Candidate Oath form is not required by the SOE. The number of appointed members is limited to ten percent (10%) of the total number of elected members to which the DECSC is entitled.

Term: These members shall take office on the date of the DECSC approval and shall serve for up to one year. However, their term shall expire immediately prior to the commencement of the next organizational meeting of the DECSC during a presidential election year. Appointed members may be reappointed by the Chair with the approval of a majority of the members present.

Privileges: Appointed members shall enjoy voting and other privileges of membership, except they shall not be eligible to be officers of the DECSC or to vote in election of officers at the Organizational Meetings, due to their terms expiring immediately prior to those meetings.



Process: Persons who are being appointed At Large by the SCDP Chair must contact the Precinct Organization Chair of the SCDP to begin the process: attend a DECSC meeting; complete the Florida Democratic Party Loyalty Oath; be elected by majority vote and take the oath of office at their second DECSC meeting. In addition, they are expected to attend PC Orientation, before or after being elected.

2. Non-Voting Honorary Members

Honorary members may be nominated by any DECSC member and elected by a majority vote of those present and voting. Elected for life, honorary membership is granted in recognition of sustained, loyal work for the Party. Honorary members may participate in debate but may not vote or hold office.

Section 2. Vacancies.

A position on the DECSC shall be deemed vacant when a member:

1. Submits a written or emailed resignation.
2. Ceases to be a registered Democrat of Sarasota County.
3. Accumulates three (3) or more unexcused absences in any one (1) calendar year and fails to perform to a minimum standard the expectations for the role described in Article IX.
4. Is removed from office under the provisions of Article XIII.

When a vacancy occurs under points 3. or 4., the Chair shall notify the member in writing of the pending removal. The member shall have the right to appeal by giving notice to the Chair or Secretary of the DECSC.

Article V Associate

DECSC Associates are those registered Democrats residing in Sarasota County who wish to make a contribution to the DECSC but have fewer responsibilities than elected or appointed members. Prospective Associates must attend at least one DECSC meeting and be introduced. Associates may, but are not required to, take the loyalty oath, do not have attendance requirements, and cannot vote, but may participate in debate at DECSC meetings. The term of an Associate is one year from DECSC approval. However, during a presidential election year, their term shall expire immediately prior to the commencement of the DECSC Organizational Meeting.



Article VI Officers

Section A. Officers

There shall be **elected from the membership of the DECSC** four (4) Officers:

Chair
Vice Chair
Secretary
Treasurer

There shall be six (6) additional Officers of the DECSC **elected from the membership of the DECSC as State Committee Members. No more than 3 State Committee Members may be of the same gender identities:**

No two officer positions shall be held by the same DECSC member at the same time during the same term.

Section B. Chair and Vice Chair

The Chair and Vice Chair, when elected at the scheduled biennial elections, must be of differing gender identities.

Section C. Duties

Each officer shall perform the usual and customary duties of his or her office, those assigned by the Florida Statutes and the Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party and the DECSC. It shall be the duty of each officer of the DECSC to become certified as a DEC officer under the Florida Democratic Party or Democratic County Chairs' Association Certification Training consisting of DEC Operations and Coordinated Campaign training within 6 months of taking office, or as available.

1. **Chair.** It shall be the duty of the Chair to: preside at all meetings of the DECSC and of the Steering Committee; appoint the Chairs and the membership of all Standing Committees, the Group chairs and sub-committees within sixty (60) days of assuming office; advise the Secretary of any special meetings in sufficient time for the Secretary to send notice of such meeting to the DECSC membership; approve all checks issued; serve as an ex-officio member of all committees of the DECSC; promulgate an annual precinct organization and campaign schedule and campaign budget; serve as the only official spokesperson for the DECSC or to designate a temporary spokesperson; receive resignations of officers and committee members.

2. **Vice Chair.** It shall be the duty of the Vice Chair to: a) act during the absence or inability of the Chair to render and perform **their** duties or exercise **their** powers, b) serve as an ex-officio member of all committees, and c) perform such other duties as the Chair shall direct.



3. **Secretary.** It shall be the duty of the Secretary to: a) attend and keep minutes and records of all membership meetings of the DECSC and submit copies of said minutes and records to the DECSC and the Florida Democratic Party within 20 days, b) keep, file and report on correspondence related to the DECSC, c) retain a membership list of all the members of the DECSC or proxies and guests, at each meeting of the DECSC, d) mail written notice of any special meeting at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting except in cases of emergency or as specifically stipulated in these Bylaws; such notice should include an agenda, if possible, and a brief summary of issue items requiring a decision at that meeting, e) send a complete and updated membership list to the State Chair by January 31 of each year, f) perform such other duties as the Chair shall direct.

4. **Treasurer.** It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to: a) deposit any and all funds in such bank(s) as the DECSC may direct, and b) to be responsible for all funds of the DECSC as required by Florida Statutes and the Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party, c) keep a record of all receipts and expenditures, pay all legitimate bills, render an accounting of all receipts and expenditures at each meeting of the DECSC and d) file required reports with the Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections and all municipal clerks, as required, arrange for an annual audit of the financial condition of the DECSC and file a copy of the audit with the Florida Democratic Party and the Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections prior to April 1 of the ensuing year, f) transfer all records to the successors in office after all accounts have been audited and approved by the appropriate authorities, g) perform such other duties as the Chair shall direct.

5. State Committee Members: (Per FDP Bylaws, 2.1.3 pg 3)

The county's 6 state committee members shall be equally divided between men and women (determined by gender self-identification), but where this is not practical the variance shall not be greater than one (1). In the case of gender non-binary committee members, they shall not be counted as either a male or female, and the remainder of the members shall be equally divided. The diversity and inclusion goal is to mirror the county's demographic diversity. Specific goals for inclusivity are not limited to Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian Americans or other ethnic groups, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, youth, and veterans. Goals are to achieve diversity and inclusion, but will not be imposed by quotas. (Per FDP Bylaws, 3.1, pg 7)

Duties of the Committee Members: The duties of the state committee members are to attend meetings of the Florida Democratic State Executive Committee and any other state party committees on which they serve and to represent the county's Democratic voters on matters before the state party. At least two of the county's state committee members of different genders shall serve as liaison between the Florida Democratic Party and the county DEC; liaison between the county DEC and the clubs and



caucuses; serve as members of the State Executive Committee and county DEC Steering Committee; serve as members of the county DEC Campaign Committee; and serve as members of other committees as designated by the DEC Charter and Bylaws.

In addition, it shall be the duty of the State Committeepersons to: Report State business to the DECSC; participate cooperatively in DECSC activities; reflect, to the best of their knowledge, the wishes of the DECSC in all votes cast; keep the DECSC informed of all changes made in the Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party; attend all State Executive Committee meetings or, when attendance is not possible, obtain proxies; attend all Special State Committee meetings (of which they are members) or when attendance is not possible, obtain proxies.

Section D. Elections

The Officers shall be elected at each biennial election meeting of the DECSC held in the month of December following the presidential and gubernatorial general elections (except when otherwise directed by Florida Statutes or the Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party) and shall take office immediately upon election. Their term of office shall be two (2) years.

State Committee Members shall be elected at the DECSC organizational meeting in December following a presidential general election, from among those members elected from the precincts. Their term of office shall be four (4) years and vacancies shall be filled by the DECSC.

A majority of those present and voting is required to elect officers. If there are more than two candidates and no candidate receives a majority of the votes, there shall be an immediate runoff between the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes.

Section E. Vacancies

1. A vacancy in any officer position shall be effective immediately upon submission of a resignation to another officer of the DECSC or when the officer ceases to be a member of the DECSC.

2. A vacancy in the office of Chair shall be filled by the Vice Chair who shall serve as acting Chair until the vacancy is filled by an election held at a regular meeting at least 25 days after the vacancy occurs, but no longer than 45 days, by a majority of the qualified members present and voting. **A vacancy in any office other than Chair may be filled by the Chair's appointment of a DECSC member to serve in an acting capacity until the vacancy is filled by an election held at a regular meeting at least 25 days after the vacancy occurs, but no longer than 45 days, by a majority of the qualified members present and voting.**



In the event that a vacancy in the office of county Democratic Executive Committee chair is filled by a person of the same sex as the county Democratic Executive Committee vice chair, or vice versa, the requirement that they be of the opposite sex shall be waived for the unexpired term. (Per FDP Bylaws)

3. A vacancy in the position of an incumbent officer who is elected Chair shall be filled at the same meeting, if possible, or within 45 calendar days of the vacancy, by a majority of the members present and voting.

4. In the event of the unexpected absence of both the Chair and-Vice Chair at a special or regular meeting, the members may elect one of the elected members of the DECSC to serve as Chair for that meeting or until the Chair or-Vice Chair appears and begins to preside.

5. Any officer of the DECSC may be removed from office upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire membership at a regular or special meeting of the same, provided that there shall have been at least ten (10) days written notice of the purpose of said meeting. Such removal may be for cause, including, but not limited to, malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, incompetence, permanent inability to perform official duties, and/or conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude.

Leave of Absence: (Per FDP Bylaws)

Any officer seeking the Democratic nomination for public office shall take a leave of absence from person's DECSC office commencing at the time of opening a campaign account for said public office and extending for the duration of the campaign. The vacancy created shall be filled by the DECSC for the interim period.

**Article VII
Meetings**

Section A. During each presidential election year, the DECSC shall hold an organizational meeting to elect six (6) State Committee Members, and the four (4) Officers.

During each gubernatorial election year, the DECSC shall hold a meeting during the month of December to elect the four (4) Officers.

Section B. The DECSC shall meet at a minimum of once every calendar quarter / every 3 months, with such calendar quarter beginning in January of each year. The regular meeting shall be held on the second Wednesday of the calendar month, **unless timely notice of a change from the regular schedule is provided DECSC members** by email or US Mail. DECSC training meetings will be held as part of the regular



membership meetings **at** such times as determined by the Chair to be necessary and expedient to achieve the DECSC's purposes and good functioning. (Per FDP Bylaws, 4 pg 7)

Meetings of the Florida Democratic Party and its components shall be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of race, color, creed, sex, age, religion, economic status, ethnic identity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. No vote shall be taken by secret ballot. Adequate records shall be kept of all meetings. (Per FDP Bylaws, 4.1.1)

Section C. A special meeting may be called by the Chair, or any fifteen (15) members upon giving no less than ten (10) calendar days' notice by **US Mail**, or e-mail, to **all members of the date, time, place, and matters to be considered/acted upon at such special meeting**. The ten days shall be computed from the date of the mailing of the notice.

Section D. During any regular or special meeting, a majority of the elected and appointed members present and voting may call a special meeting. Notice of such meeting shall be mailed, or e-mailed, to each member not in attendance for such vote. The notice shall comply with requirements of Section C as to place, time, and matters to be considered.

Section E. Proxies (Per FDP Bylaws, pg 10)

For any meeting, a member may designate a proxy.

For a proxy to be honored by a county Democratic Executive Committee, the holder shall submit written notice via Proxy Form to the DECSC Secretary prior to the meeting. **An Elected member** of a county Democratic Executive Committee shall designate **another DEC member or**, in the alternative, a Democrat residing in the same precinct or district as said elected member.

An Automatic or Appointed At Large member of a county Democratic Executive Committee shall designate a Democrat residing **in the same county** as said member.

Quorum Limitation: Proxies may not account for more than fifteen percent (15%) in computing a quorum.

Attendance: Proxies shall not be considered in the fulfillment of attendance requirements.

Section F. Quorums

(Per FDP Bylaws, pg 11-12)-and See page 24 in SCDP Bylaws, 1.3.6 and 1.3.7

A Quorum for conducting DECSC business is defined as Twenty-five percent (25%) of the total membership, excluding Automatic members (elected officials, club and caucus leaders)



A Quorum for Democratic Clubs and Caucuses: Twenty percent (20%) of the total membership for clubs and caucuses with membership of 499 or less. Ten percent (10%) of the total membership for clubs and caucuses with membership of 500 or more. However, clubs and caucuses may establish a higher quorum requirement.

Before any business is conducted at any meeting, the Secretary and/or their designee shall provide a list of all prospective members eligible for the DECSC at that time. The attendance record of each meeting of the DECSC shall be maintained as an official record of the DECSC. Absent a quorum at any meeting, a majority of those members present and voting may adjourn to the next regular meeting or a special meeting. If the adjournment is to a special meeting, notice as described in Section C must be mailed, or e-mailed to each member not present at the time of such adjournment vote. Proxies shall not be counted for the purpose of avoiding the statutory mandate of forfeiture of office for failure to attend DECSC regular meetings.

Section G. The Chair may appoint a Parliamentarian, refer to **the Parliamentarian** points of order and interpretations of rules and these Bylaws and may adopt the opinions of the Parliamentarian as the ruling of the Chair. However, any member may appeal the ruling to the DECSC pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

Section H. Procedures not controlled by Florida Statute, the Charter or Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party, or these Bylaws shall conform to Robert's Rules of Order, Revised. **The DECSC may, by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, adopt special rules to organize discussion and voting on resolutions brought before the DECSC.**

Section I. The Chair, in conjunction with the Steering Committee, shall set the agenda for any meeting subject to change by majority of the members present and voting. The agenda shall be presented to the members prior to the beginning of each meeting.

Section J. All meetings of the DECSC shall be handicapped accessible

Section K. Organizational Meeting The DECSC shall hold an organizational meeting, called by the chair of the preceding Democratic Executive Committee, within thirty (30) days after said committee members take office. (From FDP Bylaws 3.2.1)

Agenda: The organizational meeting shall be called to order by the county DECSC Chair, who shall chair the meeting until the election of the new chair, who shall then assume the chair. The order of business shall be as follows:

1. Invocation
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Credentials Report



5. Election of Chair
6. Election of State Committee Members
7. Election of Vice Chair
8. Election of Secretary
9. Election of Treasurer
10. Election of Any Other Officers

Article VIII Groups and Standing Committees

The DECSC shall establish the following Committees to further the goals and policies of the Sarasota County Democratic Party and the FDP:

Section A. Standing Committees of the DECSC are: the Officers, the Steering Committee, and various designated committees. Each committee chair shall determine their objectives subject to review by the Steering Committee and approval of the DECSC. The Chair shall appoint the committee chairs from among the members of the DECSC. Members of each committee within each group shall be appointed by the Chair and/or committee chairs. The Chair and committee chairs may assign to each committee such duties as are compatible and consistent with these Bylaws. Each committee shall keep records of the meetings held and any votes taken, maintain minutes and attendance records, and shall submit these reports of its activities to the Steering Committee and the DECSC each month.

1. The Officers

The Officers shall consist of the officers of the DECSC, together with the immediate past Chair of the DECSC, who shall be an honorary, nonvoting member. The Officers shall exercise, as necessary, the executive and administrative functions of the DECSC between meetings, except those reserved to the Steering Committee and the DECSC by these Bylaws. Meetings may be called, at the discretion of the Chair, upon the written request of a majority of the voting members of the DECSC upon 48 hours' notice, by email or other form of verifiable electronic communication. As circumstances may require, notice may be waived, upon the written consent of not less than a majority of the voting members of the DECSC. Further, as circumstances may require, at the discretion of the Chair, votes may be taken by email, text message or other form of verifiable electronic communication; provided, however, that a written record of all actions taken shall be prepared within ten (10) calendar days from the date of such action, and copies furnished to all members. Summaries of all meetings or proceedings shall be furnished to the members within ten (10) calendar days from the date of such meeting or proceeding, and copies furnished to all members.

2. Steering Committee.

The Chair of the DECSC shall be the Chair of the Steering Committee. The membership shall include the officers of the DECSC, State Committeepersons, chartered club and



caucus presidents, and the chairs of the subcommittees. This committee is charged with advising and reporting to the Chair and Officers upon the activities of the members of the member Clubs, Caucuses, and Committees of the DECSC, the accomplishments or failures of the committees, recommending activities and procedures, and reviewing reports, positions or statements to be made in the name of the DECSC by any member or committee. The Chair, in conjunction with the Steering Committee, shall prepare the agenda for the DECSC.

3. Diversity and Inclusion Committee

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall work in conjunction with the FDP initiatives to promote the rights and advancement of disadvantaged persons and minority groups.

4. Young Democrats Committee

The Young Democrats Committee shall work with the Florida Young Democrats to attract and engage young persons to participate actively in the Democratic Party.

Section B. The Chair may appoint ad hoc committees as he or she sees fit and may assign any duties that do not impede the work of the standing committees.

Article IX Duties and Responsibilities of DECSC Members

The objective of the DECSC is to obtain the highest possible number of Democratic votes in each election and elect Democratic candidates to public office.

It is the duty and responsibility of Elected DECSC members to endeavor to:

1. Attend each meeting of the DECSC.
2. Attempt to contact all Democrats and other target voter groups in their precinct, at a minimum, prior to every general election.
3. Participate in SCDP initiatives to obtain the highest possible Democratic registration and voter turnout.
4. Encourage and facilitate Democrats using Vote by Mail.
5. Contribute to and/or raise funds for the DECSC.
6. Assist in filling vacancies in precinct committee offices as they may occur.



7. Report any change of residence to the DECSC and to the Supervisor of Elections no later than thirty (30) days after such change is effective.

Article X Membership Lists and Minutes

Section A. The names, addresses and type of membership of each DECSC member and officer shall be kept by the Secretary and shall be publicly available, with additions and corrections made monthly.

Section B. The minutes of all meetings shall be kept by the Secretary and shall be presented at the next meeting for approval. If the minutes are mailed, or e-mailed, to committee members, they may be approved without reading at the next meeting. Copies shall be sent to the State Chair as required by the Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party.

Article XI Finances and Audit

The Treasurer shall maintain the books of the DECSC. There shall be an annual audit of the financial condition of the DECSC for each calendar year in compliance with applicable Federal Laws and the Florida Statutes and conducted by a qualified examiner or examiners who shall not be members of the DECSC.

Article XII Loyalty Oath

Members of the DECSC shall subscribe to the loyalty oath prescribed by the Florida Democratic Party.

Article XIII Removal of Members for Cause

Any member of the DECSC, elected or appointed, may be removed from office upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire membership at a regular or special meeting of same provided that there shall have been at least ten (10) days written notice of the purpose of said meeting. Such removal may be for cause, including, but not limited to, malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, incompetence, permanent inability to perform official duties, and/or conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude.



Article XIV Amendments

The Bylaws of the DECSC may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote. Any proposed amendments shall be published in the minutes of the meeting preceding the meeting at which the vote is to be taken. Any proposed amendment(s) shall be mailed to all members at least fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be taken, and made available for perusal by reasonable request. The Secretary of the DECSC shall receive a copy of any amendment(s) at the time they are mailed to members.

Revisions Approved at the **April 2024** DECSC meeting.