

## Bylaws of the Iowa City Local Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America

Adopted 4/28/2018

Approved by NPC 7/26/2019

### **ARTICLE I. Name.**

The name of this not-for-profit voluntary association shall be the Iowa City IA Local Chapter of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). DSA is a not-for-profit corporation.

The shortened name of the association is the Iowa City DSA (ICDSA).

### **ARTICLE II. Purpose.**

The Iowa City Local Chapter of Democratic Socialists of America (ICDSA) seeks to facilitate the transition to a truly democratic and socialist society, one in which the means/resources of production are democratically and socially controlled.

ICDSA rejects an economic order based solely on private profit, alienated labor, gross inequalities of wealth and power, discrimination based on race, gender or sexual orientation, and brutality and violence in defense of the status quo.

ICDSA envisions a humane social order based on popular control of resources, production, and economic planning, equitable distribution, gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships.

Our conception of socialism is a profoundly democratic one. It is rooted in the belief that human beings should be free to develop to their fullest potential, that public policies should be determined not by wealth but by popular participation, and that individual liberties should be carefully safeguarded. It is committed to a freedom of speech that does not recoil from dissent, to a freedom to organize independent trade unions, women's groups, political parties, and other formations -- recognizing these as essential bulwarks against the dangers of an intrusive state. It is committed to a freedom of religion that acknowledges the rights of those for whom spiritual concerns are central.

We are socialists because we are developing a concrete strategy for achieving that vision. In the present, we are building a visible socialist presence within the broad democratic Left. In the long run, we hope to build a majority movement capable of making democratic socialism a reality in the United States. Our strategy acknowledges the class structure of the U.S. society. This class structure means that there is a basic conflict of interest between those sectors with enormous economic power and the vast majority of the population.

**ARTICLE III. Membership.**

## Section 1. Membership.

Members of the ICDSA will be those individuals whose dues to national DSA are paid in full, who reside and/or work in the vicinity of Iowa City including but not limited to Johnson County, Iowa. Individuals may not be members of the Local Chapter without being members of national DSA. It will be the responsibility of members to approve policies and guidelines for the operation of the Local Chapter, to elect delegates to the national convention, to vote on matters related to national policy, and to make recommendations on issues and other matters to the National Political Committee of DSA.

## Section 2. Removal of Members.

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 if they are found to be under the discipline of any democratic centralist organization, the Local Chapter may vote to expel them from the Local Chapter of DSA. In order for such a finding to be made, another DSA member must formally prefer written charges against the member in question to the Local Chapter Executive Committee, which shall set the date of a Local Chapter meeting for deliberations on the charges. The member in question must receive a copy of the written charges and notice of the meeting a minimum of two weeks before that meeting takes place. Expulsion of a member requires a two-thirds vote of the Local Chapter meeting. An expelled member in good standing may appeal to the National Political Committee of DSA.

## Section 3. Voluntary Donations.

As mandated by the national constitution and bylaws, the Local Chapter may establish a Local Chapter 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 Local Chapter office.

## Section 4. Privacy concerns.

Care will be taken to protect the privacy of each member's contact information.

**ARTICLE IV. Local Chapter Meetings.**

## Section 1. General Meeting.

The Local Chapter will hold a minimum of one General Meeting annually for purposes of electing officers. All members of the Local Chapter will be sent notice of and an agenda for the General Meeting. Notice may be sent by electronic means, but individuals who have not provided an email address must be sent a paper copy. The General Meeting will elect Local Chapter officers and may adopt an annual budget. In general, it is the highest legislative body of the Local Chapter. The General Meeting may coincide with a Regular Meeting.

## Section 2. Regular Meetings.

The Local Chapter will hold Regular Meetings at least four times annually, the time and place of which shall be set in a schedule published and distributed by the Local Chapter Executive Committee. The Regular Meetings will set Local Chapter policy and work priorities, and they will include political education sessions.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee will set the agenda for Regular Meetings. In general, the Regular Meeting is the operating legislative body of the Local Chapter.

### Section 3. Emergency Meetings.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee may call an Emergency Meeting of the Local Chapter on five days' notice when an urgent and important matter requires deliberation.

### Section 4. Quorum.

A quorum of 10 percent of the members (but not fewer than six persons) is required for General, Regular, or Emergency Meetings to transact business.

## **ARTICLE V. Local Chapter Officers: Powers and Duties.**

### Section 1. Officers and Terms.

The officers of the Local Chapter will be two Co-Chairs, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and the holders of any additional office created by the Executive Committee as outlined in Section 6. The term of office will be one year, and it shall run from July 1 to June 30 or until their successors are elected. The officers may not all be of the same gender.

### Section 2. Vacancies.

In the event of a vacancy in any Local Chapter office, the Local Chapter Executive Committee will appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term.

### Section 3. Co-Chairs.

a. The Co-Chairs will be the chief executive officers of the Local Chapter. They will preside over Local Chapter and Executive Committee meetings or will appoint a substitute to assume the powers and duties of the presiding officer as specified in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. The Co-Chairs will be the official public spokespersons for the Local Chapter and will initiate such actions and policies as the Local Chapter's general welfare may demand.

b. The Co-Chairs will be responsible also for coordinating the day-to-day operations and political work of the Local Chapter's branches and committees.

c. The Co-Chairs will report to Local Chapter Regular Meetings on the business of the Executive Committee Meetings, at which time a copy of the minutes of those meetings will be available for inspection.

### Section 4. Secretary.

The Secretary will be responsible for answering all correspondence and queries of the Local Chapter. They will ensure effective communication with national DSA. They will temporarily assume the responsibilities of the Co-Chair in the event neither Co-Chair is able to do so. The Secretary will be responsible also for the taking of minutes of all Local Chapter and Executive Committee Meetings. They shall have custody of these minutes, and the resolutions, reports and other official records of the Local Chapter. They shall transfer official records in good condition to their successor.

#### Section 5. Treasurer.

The Treasurer will be responsible for the funds and financial records of the Local Chapter. All funds collected by the Local Chapter will be turned over to the Treasurer, who shall deposit them in a bank account under the name of the Local Chapter. The Treasurer will prepare the annual Local Chapter budget and deliver the Local Chapter financial report to the General Meeting of the Local Chapter. They shall periodically make progress reports as requested by the Executive Committee of the Local Chapter.

#### Section 6. Additional Offices.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee may create additional Local Chapter offices as needed and assign duties to that office, so long as any such assignments do not conflict with the designation of responsibilities outlined in these Bylaws. The Local Chapter Executive Committee may also rescind such additional Local Chapter offices, but only at the end of a term. The term of any additional Local Chapter office shall be one year, and it shall run from July 1 to June 30 and expire regardless of whether a successor has been elected.

#### Section 7. Additional Duties.

The Local Chapter Executive 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 VI. Executive Committee.**

#### Section 1. Composition.

The Iowa City Local Chapter Executive Committee will be composed of the four officers of the Iowa City Local Chapter, one chair of each Iowa City Local Chapter branch, and the holders of any additional Local Chapter office. No member of the Iowa City Local Chapter Executive Committee shall hold more than one vote on Executive Committee affairs, even if they hold multiple offices that qualify for Executive Committee membership.

#### Section 2. Duties.

a. The Executive Committee administers the affairs of the Local Chapter and oversees the implementation of the decisions of the General and Regular Meetings; it may also propose policy to the General and Regular Meetings. It shall have the power to receive reports of any committee or branch, and advise thereon, to call Emergency Meetings of the Local Chapter, and to act on any matter that requires immediate and urgent action. The Executive Committee is the regular

executive body of the Local Chapter, and thus subordinate to its Legislative bodies, the General and Regular Meetings.

b. The Iowa City Local Chapter Executive Committee will be responsible for establishing program activities for the Local Chapter, for proposing guidelines and policies that will subsequently be voted on by members in good standing of DSA, and for acting on the organization's behalf between Local Chapter meetings.

c. Members of the Executive Committee are expected to attend all General and Regular meetings, and most Executive Committee Meetings. Members of the Executive Committee are also expected to maintain open and prompt lines of communication with each other, reading correspondence related to chapter activities within a timely manner and responding in a timely manner when appropriate.

### Section 3. Meetings.

The meetings of the Executive Committee will be held at the call of one of the Co-Chairs at such intervals as may be determined by a prior Executive Committee Meeting or by consultation with any three members of the Executive Committee. All members of the Executive Committee must (ordinarily) be given four days oral, written, or electronic notice of regular Executive Committee Meetings; a 24-hour notice may be given under special emergency circumstances.

### Section 4. Removal

Members of the Executive Committee may be removed by a 2/3rds vote of the membership present at a Regular Meeting. This is to be treated as a serious recourse to misconduct or dereliction of duty, including failing to perform the duties outlined in Article VI, Section 2, or live up to the standards of behavior outlined in Article III, Section 2.

### Section 5. Quorum.

A quorum of a simple majority, including at least two officers, is required for the transaction of Executive Committee business.

## **ARTICLE VII. Branches.**

### Section 1. Definition.

A branch is a subgroup of the Iowa City Local Chapter consisting of at least five 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 Executive Committee.

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 Executive Committee.

## **ARTICLE VIII. Committees.**

### Section 1. Duration.

The Local Chapter will have Ad Hoc Committees or Working Groups, which will exist for a limited duration. Ad Hoc Committees may be established by a vote of members in good standing at a Regular Meeting of the Local Chapter.

#### Section 2. Duties.

Chairs of Ad Hoc Committees will keep the Executive Committee and the Regular Meetings of the Local Chapter informed on the activities of the committee.

### **ARTICLE IX. Delegates to National, Regional, and State Bodies.**

#### Section 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.

#### Section 2. Schedule of Elections to National, Regional, or State Organizations.

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

#### Section 3. Method of Voting.

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 months, or less than forty-five days, prior to the opening of the National Convention. No election for delegates shall be conducted before the appointment of delegates."

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's membership or a motion supported by 15% of those present and voting at the Local meeting which determines the method of election will require the use of the Hare system in that Local's election of delegates to the National Convention."

### **ARTICLE X. Prohibited Activity**

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

### **ARTICLE XI. Nominations and Elections.**

#### Section 1. Nominations Committee.

A three-person Nominations Committee shall be established at least one month prior to every election by vote of a Regular Meeting. It shall solicit and receive nominations for the positions to be elected.

#### Section 2. Nominations Process.

Nominations for Local Chapter officers and delegates to the National Convention shall be opened 10 days before and closed at the election meeting. The call for nominations shall be announced to all members in good standing of DSA as soon as nominations are open.

#### Section 3. Uncontested Positions.

If a position is uncontested, the nominee may be declared elected by acclamation. If any member objects to such election by acclamation, members must vote “yes” or “no” for the nominee.

#### Section 4. Grandfathering

The results of the initial election held during the formation of the chapter, insofar as they apply to the structure of the Executive Committee as outlined in these bylaws, will be honored until October 1<sup>st</sup>, at which point an election will be held. Individuals elected at that time will serve until February 1 and will complete the subsequent full term.

- a. The positions of “Chair” and “Vice Chair” will become “Co-Chairs” as outlined in these bylaws.
- b. The positions of “Treasurer-Secretary” and “Membership Coordinator” will be combined into the position of “Secretary-Treasurer” as outlined in these bylaws.
- c. All other positions will become appointed positions as outlined in these bylaws.

### **ARTICLE XII. Amendments.**

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be made by written resolution, endorsed by five members of the Local Chapter of DSA, and submitted to the Executive Committee a month in advance of a General or Regular Meeting. The Executive Committee is required to provide the Local Chapter membership with two weeks’ written or electronic notice of the proposed amendments. The amendment must be approved by a majority vote of two consecutive (Regular or General) Local Chapter meetings.

### **ARTICLE XIII. Rules of the Local Chapter.**

#### Section 1. Rules.

The members shall transact all business at General, Regular, and Emergency Meetings according to consensus decision-making where applicable. Any member may propose a topic for consensus at any meeting. The Executive Committee shall create the agenda and allot time for consensus building. In overview, consensus is reached through the following process:

1. Define Problem or Topic

2. Propose Solutions to build Consensus

3. Propose Vote. Once there appears to be general consensus, any member or facilitator may propose a vote. Votes can be made in the following categories

a. Block: I have serious problems with the proposed solutions and require additional discussion.

b. Reservations: I do not wish to stop proceedings but would like to document a reservation. These will be included in meeting minutes.

c. Stand Aside (Abstain): I do not agree but do not wish to stop the group from moving ahead.

d. Agreement: I agree with the proposal

4. A consensus is reached if there are no Blocks.

5. If no consensus is reached, the Co-Chairs shall allot a timed discussion to attempt to resolve specific blocking issues, after which a second vote shall be held. The second vote shall be final and binding if there is 75% majority of votes in favor.

Section 2. Action Out of Order.

Any action taken by an officer or member of the Local Chapter in contravention of these Bylaws is null and void.

Section 3. Harassment Policy

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

**Article XIV. Distribution of assets.**

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