

Democrats Abroad Sweden Election 2019 Candidate Statements

In addition to the five officers of the Executive Committee, DA Sweden must elect two (2) Members-At-Large in 2019. As described in the Democrats Abroad Charter, when a Country Committee has an even number of Members-At-Large, they must be gender balanced.

You may vote for up to two (2) Members-At-Large.

The first position goes to the top vote getter, and the second position goes to the next top vote getter of a different gender.

If a candidate is running for Member-At-Large, as well as Chair or Vice Chair, and is elected to the Chair or Vice Chair position, they will automatically withdraw from the Member-At-Large race.

Candidate for Chair

Alex Lange (identifies male)

Statement:

It's been a privilege to serve as Chair for one term. I am running for a second term, because we have consistently performed at the top of Democrats Abroad under my leadership, and we can do even better.

If you re-elect me, our big priorities will be:

- 1) Focus on turning out the vote in 2020. We can set the new standard for how to turn out Americans who live abroad and do our part to win.
- 2) Develop our volunteers and build great teams across Sweden. We need strong chapters and engaged volunteers so we can deliver on our mission, and be sustainable for the long-term.
- 3) Grow our membership and have a great Global Primary. Because the more we are, and the better organized we are, the stronger we are.

I am asking for your vote, so I can serve another term and put these priorities into action.

Short Bio:

Born in Minneapolis, MN, I was raised in northern Germany with dual citizenship. I currently work for Civil Rights Defenders, a Swedish nonprofit focused on protecting the civil and political rights of human rights defenders who face repression around the world.

I am a B.A. graduate of the University of Glasgow with a dual degree in Politics and Business & Management, and also hold an M.A. in Social Sciences with a focus on Political Theory from the University of Chicago.

I have worked in Research and Operations for political campaigns in the United States, including the 2012 Presidential re-election campaign for Barack Obama and various local, state, and federal elections. Here in Sweden I have also worked as a political analyst, and sit on the board of the American Club of Sweden.

Candidate for Vice Chair and Member at Large

Beth Landry, BSN, RN (identifies non-binary, Pronouns: She/They)

Statement:

Throughout my various professional and volunteer experiences, I have perpetually found myself returning to one important fact: building power for working people and families to improve quality of life and advocating for fundamental human rights are passions of mine. Our current administration thrives on the devaluation and oppression of people, and I cannot exist on the sidelines while this happens. My experiences both at the bedside as a nurse, as well as a Statewide Organizing Director have given me an abundance of insight and valuable lessons learned. Empowering and motivating people through intentional relationship-building is crucial to systemic changes necessary, and to continually build the Democratic Party and ultimately have substantial wins in 2020. I believe, as Democrats Abroad Sweden's next Vice Chair, I can galvanize our fellow Democrats to help us build together, vote for Democrats in upcoming elections in 2020 and beyond, and have a more sustainable future.

Short Bio:

I am originally from rural Maryland, and later moved to the Washington, DC area to practice post-operative and critical care nursing. While in DC, I was a union representative for National Nurses United, and advocated for issues such as Nurse-to-Patient Ratios. I was a District-Level Delegate to the 2016 DNC, and after that started an elections- and issue-based volunteer group in my town of Frederick, Maryland. In 2017 to 2018, I worked as the Healthcare Organizer and Statewide Organizing Director, respectively, with grassroots nonprofit organization Progressive Maryland. My work has included mentorship, leadership development, and organizing approximately 15,000 volunteer direct voter contacts statewide in Maryland during the 2018 Primary season. My partner and I moved to Malmö in late 2018 for their work. I am a queer and non binary individual, and LGBTQ+ issues are very important to me.

Candidate for Vice Chair and Member at Large

Elizabeth Clark Wessel (identifies female)

Statement:

I believe the 2020 election is the most pivotal fight for US democracy in my lifetime, and I want to do what I can to get Democrats elected across the country. Beyond that, I'm so inspired by the conversations taking place about the future of the Democratic Party, and I think US citizens living abroad have a special perspective to bring to that conversation.

Short Bio:

Elizabeth Clark Wessel is a translator and poet living in Stockholm, Sweden. She grew up in Nebraska, and lived for more than a decade in New York and Connecticut. She was involved in Democrats Abroad Sweden from 2003-2005, where her focus was on event planning and fundraising. Other relevant political experience includes an internship in the constituent affairs office of Senator Hillary Clinton in the fall of 2001.

Candidate for Secretary

Jeffrey Cheng (identifies male)

Statement:

I am so grateful to be nominated to continue to serve as Secretary of DASweden, and would like to extend a big thanks to all who have supported me in my roles thus far.

Currently, I serve as the International Secretary, as well as the Sweden Secretary, and am running for re-election for a second term. Over the last few years, I have found a new family with DA and am glad to play such a big part in giving Americans abroad a voice in our government.

With a second term, I would like to continue on the great work the current excom has been doing, increase membership and participation, and help our chapters and volunteers utilize our digital tools to the fullest while still making sure to respect privacy and data protection.

Thank you for your consideration.

Short Bio:

I was born and raised in New York City, and attended the Bronx High School of Science before moving to Philadelphia to attend university. My background in business and engineering has helped me succeed in many roles including teaching, managing real estate, working in marketing, web design, finance, and IT. Currently I am working as an IT consultant at the Swedish House of Finance at the Stockholm School of Economics.

In 2014, my husband and I jumped at the offer of a lifetime and moved to Stockholm, Sweden for his job. When the Stockholm chapter of Democrats Abroad Sweden was re-started, I saw a great opportunity to get involved and help grow the chapter and country committee with my database knowledge, IT background, and interpersonal skills.

Candidate for Treasurer

Sheri Eklund (identifies female)

Statement:

My name is Sheri Eklund and I am interested to serve DA Sweden as Treasurer. As both an MBA who has dealt with financial management and a current math and science teacher, I feel I could serve the organization well in this role. Ensuring DA Sweden's sound finances is important to supporting the organization's great work, which I feel is absolutely critical in the coming months.

Short Bio:

I moved to Stockholm from Washington, DC in 2012 and got involved with DA as a volunteer for the 2016 election. Previously I've worked in the environmental field as a project manager with nonprofits and businesses. I have an MBA from University of North Carolina, an MS in chemistry from UC San Diego, and recently earned a BS in secondary education from Stockholm University. I hope I can have the opportunity to serve you as Treasurer.

Candidate for Counsel

Bayo Callender (identifies female)

Statement:

I am running for the position of Legal Counsel for DA Sweden. I stand ready to support the Executive Committee in its efforts to bring in the 2020 vote while timely responding to legal issues that arise along the way. I served as a legal officer, court administrator, and gender and inclusion specialist within the United Nations. In different governmental and public service entities, I served as a policy analyst, employee relations manager, civil mediator, and labour arbitrator. My areas of practice include complex litigation and legislative drafting addressing international human rights, criminal, humanitarian, and administrative law. I also served on several boards and bring a range of expertise around policy and procedure.

Short Bio:

I am a native New Yorker with a bachelor's degree from Hunter College (CUNY) and a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. I received my Juris Doctor from Western Michigan University Cooley Law School. The experience of coming of age in New York City as a Black American female deeply ingrained the importance of political advocacy and engagement. I have facilitated high-level multiple stakeholder engagement with judges, sovereign tribal representatives, legal practitioners, and policymakers, which culminated in the enactment of legislation that expanded protections to children and their tribes. I have also worked on behalf of the disabled, the elderly, the incarcerated, and victims of sexual violence. I am a formally trained mediator and public advocate. After completing a post within the United Nations in The Hague, I came to Sweden to set up business and pursue the next chapter of my career.

Candidate for Member at Large

Bill Borden (identifies male)

Statement:

I would love to help elect Democrats in the 2020 election. We must remove the cancer eroding US democracy: Donald Trump and like-minded Republicans. It's time for the US government to work for ordinary Americans including Americans abroad. We must continue to push for residence based taxation.

As DAS chair with the energetic support of our board, I led the activation of a dormant DAS that resulted in increasing membership (from about 200 to 1200 members), starting new and reactivating previous Swedish local chapters, gaining considerable media attention, successfully networking with other DA European Democrats, and contributing to the election of President Obama and other Democratic candidates throughout the USA.

Short Bio:

I was born in Chicago in a diverse community. So I naturally learned to be friends with children of different races, religions, and cultures. I earned a BA at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois majoring in speech and political science. In Sweden, I earned a Ph.D. in

journalism and mass communication. In the US, I taught students English and journalism at Kent State University and East Carolina University. In Sweden, I taught journalism and political science at universities in Uppsala and Stockholm. My company American Insights promotes Swedish businesses in English. Thus, I write websites, brochures, and business letters as well as advise customers about giving oral presentations. My voluntary activities included chairing the English Speaking Community Club and Democrats Abroad Sweden. How exciting it was to lead DAS in electing President Obama in 2008! My Swedish wife and I raised one daughter together.

Candidate for Member at Large

Christina Davis (identifies female)

Statement:

I have been a registered Democrat my entire adult life and am very proud of the principles and work of the Democratic Party. As a human rights lawyer I strongly believe that my Party works for the people and represents the people. I am deeply concerned about the direction the United States has taken during the past two years with regards to human rights and dignity, the environment, equality, and immigration. My greatest fear is that our social progress, so painfully made, is being irreparably damaged.

I want to do more than vote. I would like to help the Democratic Party in any way I can to position itself to win in 2020 and beyond.

I therefore wish to be considered as a Member-at- Large of Democrats Abroad and appreciate your consideration.

Short Bio:

My name is Christina Davis. I have been a permanent resident of Sweden since 2014. My mother was Swedish and I moved to Sweden through my family ties. I was born in Grand Forks, North Dakota but was raised in Bedford, Massachusetts. I am mother to Sebastian, my 15 year old son. We live in Sigtuna.

I am a lawyer by training and have worked as an international human rights lawyer for the past 20 plus years. My specialization has been conflict and post conflict environments. I spent five years working in Haiti with the UN and a bit more than ten years working throughout the Balkans for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I also spent time for the Organization for the American States and began my international career as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Haiti. I am currently an independent consultant.

Candidate for Member at Large

Dianna Lora (identifies female)

Statement:

I'm interested in the position because I believe that it's important to try and help make a difference. As an expat/immigrant in a country outside the US, I'm also concerned about what's happening back home and how policies are affecting the people I love. I'm also

concerned about how policies my affect me here as well in relation to filing my taxes. These things matter to me and, like I said, if I can help in any small way, sign me up!

Candidate for Member at large

Max Otterman (identifies male)

Statement:

Living as an American abroad is not easy, especially as a young American in Sweden who has grown accustomed to the simplicity of dealing with the government here. While my peers and I are proud Americans, we on some level also consider the U.S. and the way it functions – well, foreign.

DA can make a difference for young Americans in Sweden. By employing new strategies to reach young people and help them navigate U.S. elections we can make sure that they make their voices heard stateside and help them simplify life as Americans abroad.

A large portion of our membership base is comprised of under-thirties. As Member- at-Large, I intend to bring a young perspective to the Executive Committee and to DA internationally through both the youth caucus and the DA global meetings.

I hope to receive your support and encourage you to contact me at max@ottrmn.com with any questions.

Short Bio:

I am a young American living in Stockholm, originally from the town of Richmond in the Berkshires of Massachusetts. I moved to Sweden in 2003 with my family, but I have retained a close connection with the U.S. ever since.

Democratic participation is a cause I champion throughout both my work and my free time. I currently work for the Uppsala Ombudsperson for Children with youth participation and implementing the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, and am also actively engaged in several different organizations.

I previously served on the board of the Swedish Federation of Student Unions, which organizes 112,000 students in student unions. During 2018, I served as a board member of Fler unga, which aims to increase youth representation during the Swedish Almedalen Week. I am currently active in several different organizations.

Candidate for Member at Large

Rick Wicks (identifies male)

Statement:

I joined DA in 2008 after hearing about the Global Presidential Primary (which I had missed) and was involved in founding the chapter in Göteborg. I've served as chapter treasurer

(twice), chair, secretary (including IT responsible and press contact), and program coordinator for our monthly Afterworks.

I understand the global responsibility that's involved in being a DPCA Voting Representative because I've attended (in person) every global or EMEA regional (Europe-Middle East-Africa) meeting since 2014 and regularly attend monthly EMEA phone calls as well.

I'm a member of the global Resolutions Committee and have served on the global Bylaws Amendment Committee. I've also edited for the global Taxation Taskforce. It can be useful to have a personal relationship with DA leaders globally, which I have.

Unfortunately I will miss our DA-Sweden annual general meeting as (regardless of the outcome of this candidacy) I'll be preparing to leave shortly after for DA's annual global meeting in DC.

Short Bio:

I'm 72, born in Iowa, vote in Alaska, moved to Sweden in 1992. My wife is Swedish (we met in Bangladesh, got married in Anchorage, and lived six years in DC) and we have two grown children raised here.

I attended St. John's College and graduated from the campus in Santa Fe in 1968. I had a dual career in social-welfare work and bookkeeping/accounting/management. Finally I put the two sides together in the study of economics – while making a living as a freelance copy editor (usually in economics) – and got a PhD from Göteborgs Universitet in 2012.

Website: <http://rickwicks.wix.com/rick-wicks>