

National Political Committee (NPC) Priorities Resolution for DSA National Convention Consideration

DSA NPC, October 26, 2015

Whereas national conventions set the main political and organizational priorities that govern national DSA work over the ensuing two years, particularly the time and resources of national staff and the elected national political leadership devoted to these tasks;

And whereas the campaign of democratic socialist Bernie Sanders for the Democratic Party presidential nomination provides a unique opportunity to enhance public knowledge of democratic socialism and to recruit for and strengthen DSA;

And whereas the completion of the new DSA strategy document provides the opportunity to educate our members and interested parties as to the role of a socialist organization in the United States – and to recruit to and build that organization,

Be It Resolved That:

National DSA resources and leadership and staff time will be primarily devoted to the following five areas:

1. Building DSA through the Sanders campaign in 2016.

To accomplish that task, the NPC and national staff, working with the national DSA Sanders Committee, will help locals and future locals to:

- a. table and canvass with DSA materials related to the Sanders effort
- b. engage in effective recruitment to DSA of people who sign up through DSA tabling and canvassing efforts
- c. organize well-publicized DSA forums (or co-sponsored forums) on such topics as “Sanders and Building a Socialist Movement” and “Building a More Racially and Class-Diverse Sanders Campaign”
- d. develop broad, multi-racial coalitions that can continue the work of the Sanders movement after the campaign is over

In fulfilling these goals, DSA locals and activists will emphasize in their Sanders work the need to emerge from the campaign with a stronger socialist organization (DSA) and an increased socialist presence within U.S. politics. The Sanders campaign has raised public consciousness as to how unrestrained corporate power subverts democracy. DSA's task is to increase public awareness of the democratic socialist alternative to capitalism.

The national organization will provide training in the skills necessary for this work including training for one-on-one recruitment.

The national organization will set local and YDS goals to ensure that work is not only done but also evaluated.

The national organization will consider (weighing our limited resources) organizing activities inside and outside of the Democratic National Convention aimed at recruiting Sanders delegates to DSA and at recruiting activists in the streets who will be demanding that the Democrats advance a pro-labor economic and racial justice program.

DSA will also work in the Sanders movement to broaden the racial, class, and gender base of the Sanders movement and to build local progressive coalitions and relationships with organizations and protest movements that last beyond the campaign.

2. Building the Organization by Implementing Our Strategy

Over the next two years the national leadership and staff will aid our locals in expanding their activist core – and the skills of that core -- so that the organization can begin to implement the strategy document at the local and state level.

The National Office (NO) and NPC will work with each local and YDS chapter to develop a concrete plan to build a more visible and effective socialist organization in their localities. Locals should come up with a feasible set of tasks to increase their capacity do “mass work” or “coalition politics” while bringing a unique socialist perspective to the work. DSA locals will work to advance this socialist perspective through public and internal education and by injecting more demands for anti-corporate measures and non-reformist reforms into our coalition work.

When possible, the national organization will aid stronger locals in developing their own projects that are complementary to existing progressive projects so that we can maximize our own visibility as socialists (e.g., campaigns for public banks or for financial transaction taxes to finance expanded public goods or for living wage legislation).

This work will include developing study guide materials for reading and study groups to discuss the strategy document and the issues in socialist vision, analysis, and strategy raised therein.

3. Increasing DSA Involvement in Local Anti-Racist Coalition Work

To build a stronger, more diverse Left—and ultimately a more diverse socialist organization—democratic socialists must increase their involvement in coalitions fighting for racial justice.

The NPC and national staff will develop materials and training to aid our locals in engaging in more anti-racist coalition work. The national organization will also help locals to develop knowledge of their local political communities, as well as to enhance their organizing and political skills. Depending on local circumstances, anti-racist work may involve joining struggles against mass incarceration and police brutality; the fight to

defend and expand voting rights; struggles for more equitable public education (e.g., campaigns to end “the school to prison pipeline”); and/or the fight for immigrant rights.

4. Electoral Work in 2016: Defeating the Right, while Building the Left and a Stronger DSA

While building the socialist wing of a stronger Left, we also recognize the importance of defeating right-wing threats to control state and national governments at the executive, legislative, and judicial levels. Such control threatens basic labor, voting, immigrant, and reproductive rights.

Thus, our electoral strategy will have two primary components: building a stronger socialist electoral presence in U.S politics, and defeating the right and center’s unconscionable attacks on the welfare state, labor rights, immigrant rights, and reproductive justice.

In the summer and fall of 2016 DSA locals will engage strategically in electoral work, depending on local circumstances. Where Democrats face serious challenges from the extreme right, locals may work to ensure electoral victory over Republicans. Where Democrats do not face such a threat our focus may be either on supporting left-wing Democratic candidates in primary challenges against centrist Democrats or in supporting independent socialist and other third-party candidates (often in non-partisan local races) if they serve to strengthen independent socialist electoral capacity.

In either case, we will use these campaigns as opportunities to push substantive issues (such as raising the minimum wage or increasing community oversight of police) as well as to build ties between diverse progressive constituencies that can be deepened after the election is over.

5. Rethinking our Organizing Practices and Structures

We will also evaluate how our organizing practices and organizational structures can be best adapted to facilitate our longer-range strategy.