

GUIDELINES FOR DEMOCRATIC LEFT BLOG POSTS

If you have written for us in the past, you may send us a pitch rather than a full blog post, and we will let you know if we would like you to submit a full piece. Otherwise, please submit a full post.

1. We prefer original pieces. If you are submitting something that has been or will be published elsewhere, please let us know. We are most inclined to accept reposts if they have appeared in places where our membership is not likely to have seen them (such as a local newsletter or a specialized publication).
2. Length should be 500-1000 words. Exceptions can be made for complex issues, but try to be succinct.
3. Posts should be more analytic than descriptive. If a DSA local's action is being reported, it should be linked to an analysis. Think about what a democratic socialist position should be on whatever you're writing about.
4. Write in a way that is accessible but smart.
5. Sign the piece as you wish to be identified, and provide a one-sentence identifier at the end of the post. (The local chapter you're a member of, for example, or a position you hold that makes you knowledgeable about the topic.)
6. Our goal for Democratic Left blog tone: many blog sites thrive on put-downs and mean-spirited polemics. That's not what we're interested in. We want to encourage DSA members and new people to shake things up and question the status quo without promoting cynicism with one more snarky and cynical blog site.
7. When possible, include a related "call to action" in your article. This could be, for example (but is not limited to) asking readers to write to elected officials or editors, join a demonstration, sign a petition, volunteer for a project, etc. but NOT to vote for a candidate or to contribute funds to an organization that is not DSA.
8. Disclaimer: All posts other than official statements of national DSA will end with this disclaimer: "Individually signed posts do not necessarily reflect the views of DSA as an organization or its leadership."
9. Citations: Provide links to online sources if possible. Provide a citation for direct quotes. Consider providing, at the end, links to places for more information.
10. Fair Use Guidelines for Quoting Other Articles and Posts
If you are ever unsure about whether you are on weak ground regarding fair use guidelines and quoting others' writing, you should check out the Electronic Frontier Foundation's discussion of copyright laws:
<http://www.eff.org/issues/bloggers/legal/liability/IP>

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The EFF writes: “Short quotations will usually be fair use, not copyright infringement ... if you are commenting on or criticizing an item someone else has posted, you have a fair use right to quote. The law favors ‘transformative’ uses — commentary, either praise or criticism, is better than straight copying — but courts have said that even putting a piece of an existing work into a new context (such as a thumbnail in an image search engine) counts as ‘transformative.’” The Electronic Frontier Foundation also has a broader legal guide for bloggers posted on its site: <http://www.eff.org/issues/bloggers/legal>.

11. Style: DL blog follows AP style, except that we capitalize Right and Left as political groups or positions (that is, the Left, the Right, but not as adjectives: leftwing, left publication). The editorial committee will edit for style.

12. Your piece will be edited by DL blog committee members, so expect to be asked to rewrite. Duane Campbell, Dustin Guastella, Elizabeth Henderson, [Simone Morgen](#) and Barbara Joye are the editors at this time, with input from National Director Maria Svart on some controversial issues. Email info@dsausa.org with “DL BLOG SUBMISSION” in the subject line if you do not have emails for the individuals listed above.

13. You will be given final sign-off on significant changes (not on copyediting for style).

14. The DL blog works on a schedule several weeks ahead (with adjustments for breaking news), so please follow deadlines as they are agreed upon between you and your contact on the DL Blog Committee. Except when otherwise agreed upon for breaking news, the committee needs to receive the final, approved, draft 10 days before the posting date to ensure proper formatting.