

# KNOX COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY BYLAWS

Adopted March 30, 2019

## ARTICLE I. - NAME AND OBJECT

**SECTION 1:** The name of this organization shall be the Knox County Democratic Party, Tennessee.

**SECTION 2:** The object of this organization shall be to promote the ideals, principles, and values of the Democratic Party and to aid in the election of Democrats and Democratic nominees at every level of public office.

## ARTICLE II. - GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

**SECTION 1:** Eligibility. All residents of Knox County, Tennessee who are registered to vote in this county and who believe in the ideals, principles, and values of the Democratic Party are eligible to become general members of the Knox County Democratic Party. Membership dues may never be imposed.

**SECTION 2:** Nondiscrimination. Membership shall not be denied on the basis of sex, race, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic origin or identity, or disability.

## ARTICLE III. - POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**SECTION 1:** Governance. The governance and direction of the affairs of the Knox County Democratic Party shall be vested in the Knox County Democratic Party County Assembly and in the officers of the Knox County Democratic Party, hereinafter as set forth in these bylaws, subject to the laws of the state of Tennessee and such rules as may be established by the Tennessee State Party Democratic Executive Committee.

**SECTION 2:** Party Responsibilities. The Party shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) Planning and conducting all county meetings and conventions.
- b) Keeping and maintaining records of all Democratic Party meetings and business.
- c) Assisting the duly selected nominees of the Democratic Party in their elections and the education of their voters.

## ARTICLE IV. -COUNTY ASSEMBLY

**SECTION 1:** County Assembly Membership.

- (a) The County Assembly shall consist of the members of the Board of Governors and the Chair of each Precinct Committee or, in the absence of the Precinct chair, the next ranking officer of that committee.

- (b) The Board of Governors shall consist of the Officers, the Immediate past Chair, a representative from the Knox County Young Democrats, a Representative from the UTK College Democrats, a Representative from the Democratic Women’s Clubs of Knox County, a Representative from the Knox County Labor Unions, appointed by the KCDP Chair, with approval of the Board of Governors, and two Representatives from each of the nine (9) Commission Districts of Knox County.
- (c) The Board of Governors shall demonstrate gender equity and shall be composed of 2 people of different gender per county commission district, plus those who become Board of Governors members.
- (d) Members of the County Assembly are responsible to take an active role in growth and outreach strategies aimed at aiding in the election of Democrats. These efforts are directed through committee work and organizing activities in their districts.
- (e) Members may only hold one position in the County Assembly.

**SECTION 2: Manner of Election.** The district representatives to serve on the Board of Governors shall be elected during the County Convention, in county commission district caucuses, called for the purpose of electing members of the Board of Governors, at a date determined by the Board of Governors as per instructed by the Tennessee Democratic Party Executive Committee.

**SECTION 3: Resignations.** The resignation of any member of the County Assembly shall be made in writing and shall take effect at the time specified therein, or if no time is specified, then it shall take effect upon receipt of such resignation by the Chair or Secretary. All resignations must be verified and documented in meeting minutes whether by letter or verbal.

**SECTION 4: Vacancies.** Vacancies so created and vacancies occurring for other reasons shall be filled as follows:

- A. Party Officer: The County Assembly shall fill the vacancy of any Party Officer by having the Chairperson appoint a successor for the remainder of the unexpired term, with the concurrence of the County Assembly.
- B. District Representative: The Chair, in consultation with the District , shall appoint a new representative for the remainder of the unexpired term to fill the vacancy of any district representative, with the concurrence of the County Assembly.
- C. Precinct Chair: The highest-ranking Precinct Vice Chair shall fill the vacancy of any Precinct Chair until such time as the committee elects a new Chair. In the absence of a Vice Chair, a temporary Chair shall be appointed by the Board of Governors. The temporary Chair shall call a meeting of the Precinct Committee within sixty days (60) for the purpose of electing a new Chair.

**SECTION 5: Attendance.** In order to be an effective and productive County Assembly, attendance at all meetings is expected. Irregular attendance will subject members to forfeiture of their position. See Article IV, Sec 7 below.

**SECTION 6: Manner of Acting.** The act of a majority of the members of the Board of Governors present shall be the act of the County Assembly, unless a greater number be required by law or by these bylaws. Under extraordinary circumstances, when it is necessary to conduct a vote of the Board of Governors to take an action or make an obligation of funds, the Board of Governors may be polled via email or phone.

**SECTION 7: Sanctions or Expulsion**

- (a) Automatic Expulsion. Any member of the County Assembly shall automatically forfeit their membership in said committee and the position shall be declared vacant for the following

reasons:

- 1) In the event a member qualifies for political office as representing any political party other than Democratic Party or qualifies for political office as an Independent and opposes a duly qualified Democratic nominee.
- 2) No person shall be an officer or member of the County Assembly if they shall not support nominees of the Democratic Party. (See Article V, Section 12)
- 3) If a member has six (6) excused absences or three (3) unexcused absences during a term. An absence is excused if notice is given to the Chair or the Secretary prior to the start of the meeting and the reason for the absence is one of the following:
  - a) illness;
  - b) family illness or death;
  - c) business; or out of town.

When such violations are brought to the attention of the County Assembly, the County Assembly shall immediately recognize the expulsion, note it in proper minutes, and be followed by notification sent to the member expelled.

(b) Discretionary Sanctions or Expulsions.

- 1) Sanctions may be imposed against an County Assembly member or a member may be expelled if in the discretion of the County Assembly a pattern of non-attendance is established, even if such absences are excused.
- 2) Sanctions may be imposed against an County Assembly member or a member may be expelled if in the discretion of the County Assembly the member has demonstrated disloyalty to the Democratic Party, either in the form of a public announcement of support of a candidate of another party in a pending election, or by working for or giving financial support to any such candidate running against a duly nominated candidate of the Democratic Party.
- 3) Sanctions may be imposed against an County Assembly member or a member may be expelled if in the discretion of the County Assembly the member has exhibited repeated behavior that is detrimental to the Democratic Party or to Democratic candidates, or the member refuses to abide by the bylaws or otherwise has been obstructive or worked against the benefit of the Party.
- 4) The County Assembly shall not impose discretionary sanctions or expel a member unless and until such a member is given an opportunity to be heard and two-thirds (2/3) of the membership present and voting concur on discretionary sanctions or expulsion. This section does not apply to Automatic Expulsion, Article IV, Section 7 (a).
- 5) The County Assembly may vote to impose sanctions on or expel a member, but only if written notice is given that the issue will be taken up. A notice and the opportunity to be heard must be sent to the member in question not less than twenty (20) days prior to the meeting at which such action will be voted upon. The member, if present at said meeting, must be given the opportunity to be heard on the issues related to sanctions or expulsion.

## ARTICLE V. – OFFICERS

**SECTION 1: Officers.** The officers shall be chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer, all of whom shall be elected by the delegates to the biennial convention for a two (2) year term or until their successors are duly elected and qualified.

**SECTION 3. Officers Not Required to be Members of the County Assembly prior to their election as an officer of the Knox Democratic Party.** It is not required that persons nominated for officer positions be members of the County Assembly. Any officer who is duly elected, but was not previously a member of the County Assembly shall, upon election as an officer, become a voting member of the County Assembly.

**SECTION 4: Resignations.** The resignation of any officer of the County Assembly shall be made in writing and shall take effect at the time specified therein; if no time is specified, then it shall take effect upon receipt of such resignation by the chair or secretary.

**SECTION 5: Vacancies.** Vacancies in any elected office for any reason may be filled by the County Assembly for the unexpired portion of the term. See Article IV Sec. 4.

**SECTION 6: Chair.** The Chair shall serve as the spokesperson of the Knox County Party. The Chair will supervise and manage the day-to-day business of the Party. The chair shall preside over any convention which may be called and over the meetings of the County Assembly. The Chair shall perform all duties incident to the office of chair and such other duties as may be prescribed by the County Assembly members from time to time. The chair serves as ex-officio member of all committees.

**SECTION 7: Vice-Chair.** In the absence of the chair or in the event of the chair's death or inability or refusal to act, the vice-chair shall perform the duties of the chair, and in so acting, shall have all the powers of and be subject to all restrictions on the chair. The vice-chair shall perform all duties incident to the office of vice-chair and such other duties as may be assigned to them by the chair or by the County Assembly.

**SECTION 8: Secretary.** The secretary shall:

- (a) shall receive all records from their predecessor within 14 days of election;
- (b) keep the minutes of County Assembly;
- (c) distribute the minutes of each meeting to the full County Assembly in order that they can be approved at the subsequent meeting;
- (d) conduct a verbal roll call of all the County Assembly at every business meeting,
- (e) keep attendance records for every meetings of the County Assembly,
- (f) keep the minutes of any conventions which may be held;
- (g) see that all notices are duly given in accordance with provisions of law and these bylaws;
- (h) be custodian of the records of the County Assembly;
- (i) keep membership records and have general charge of membership books of the County Assembly;
- (j) in general, perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the chair or by the County Assembly, or which may be required by law;
- (k) maintain all records related to the position for a period of 5 years;
- (l) transfer all records to their successor within 14 days of election.

(m) render to the chair or to any member of the County Assembly whenever it may require or request it, the records of the activities of the County Assembly and its subcommittees.

**SECTION 9: Treasurer.** The treasurer shall:

- (a) shall receive all records from their predecessor within 14 days of election;
- (b) have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of the Party from any source whatsoever, and shall deposit all such monies in the name of the Knox County Democratic Party in such bank or other depositories as shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws;
- (c) keep and maintain, open to inspection by any member of the County Assembly at all reasonable times, adequate and correct accounts of the funds and transactions of the County Assembly which shall include all matters required by law;
- (d) disburse the funds of the County Assembly as may be ordered by through approved motions;
- (e) present a monthly itemized statement of income and expenditures to the members of the County Assembly ;
- (f) render to the chair and secretary, or to the County Assembly, whenever it may require or request it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and a financial statement in form satisfactory to them, showing the condition of the County Party;
- (g) register with the State Election Commission and file any and all reports required by the State Election Commission (SEC) and Federal Election Commission (FEC) should the County Assembly choose to become a registered Political Action Committee (PAC);
- (h) in general, perform all of the duties incident to the office of treasurer and such other duties as may be assigned by the chair or County Assembly
- (i) if required by the County Assembly, give a bond, to be paid for by the County Assembly for the faithful discharge of the duties in such sum and with such corporate surety or sureties as the County Assembly shall determine;
- (j) maintain all records related to the position for a period of 5 years; and
- (k) transfer all records to his/her successor within 14 days of election.
- (l) shall disburse a stipend of \$100.00 to the Chair each month.

**SECTION 10: One Seat/One Vote.** No person shall serve in more than one position on the County Assembly. This rule applies to all members of the County Assembly.

**SECTION 11: Neutrality.** The Knox County Party shall not endorse or campaign for any specific Democratic Primary Candidate prior to or during a contested local, state, or national Democratic Primary Election. With the exception of the Chair, County Party Officers, acting apart from their party office, may support and participate in campaigns for local, state, or national candidates of their choice in contested Democratic Primaries. All who seek to become Democratic National Convention Delegates must register in support of a specific Presidential Candidate prior to the delegate nominating procedure. Should the County Party Chair seek to become a delegate, the Chair may declare personal support for a specific Presidential candidate.

**SECTION 12: Must Support Nominees of the Democratic Party.** No person shall be an officer or County Assembly member if they shall not support nominees of the Democratic Party. Failure to support the nominees of the Democratic Party is cause for Automatic Expulsion. Officers will be removed under Article IV, Section 7, (a) 2).

## ARTICLE VI. – MEETINGS

**SECTION 1: General.** All meetings of the Knox County Democratic Party or of the County Assembly and Board of Governors shall be publicized 7 days prior to the date of the meeting. All meetings shall be held at convenient times and locations and shall be open to the general public and media representatives *(except where legal counsel otherwise indicated based upon a legal need for a closed meeting)*.

**SECTION 2: Regular Meetings.** Regular meetings of the Board of Governors shall be held monthly; the County Assembly shall meet quarterly, in place of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Governors.

**SECTION 3: Special Called Meetings.**

- (A) The chair may call an emergency meeting at any time by providing seven (7) days notice to all voting members of the County Assembly.
- (B) If more than sixty (60) days have passed since the last meeting, and if the Chairperson has not called a meeting, any one-third ( 1/3 ) of the County Assembly members may call a meeting by notifying all members at least seven (7) days prior to such a meeting.
- (C) If fewer than sixty (60) days have passed since the last meeting, one-third ( 1/3 ) of the members may call a special meeting provided seven (7) days prior notice is given.
- (D) Any notification of a special meeting must include the reason for the meeting, time and location, and may be delivered by mail, email, or phone to the County Assembly membership.

**SECTION 4: Quorum.** Fourty (40) percent of the members of the voting body required present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting of the County Assembly and Board of Governors. If less than a quorum is present at a meeting of the County Assembly or Board of Governors, a majority of the members present may adjourn the meeting.

**SECTION 5: Convention Meeting.** A regular meeting of the County Assembly shall be held without other notice than this bylaw immediately after, and at the same place as, the convention.

## ARTICLE VII. – PROXIES

**SECTION 1: No Proxies Allowed.** No proxy shall be allowed at any meeting of the County Party.

**SECTION 2: Unit Rule.** No voting by the unit rule shall be allowed at any meeting of the County Party.

**SECTION 3: Open Voting.** All votes shall be public and shall not be by secret ballot.

## ARTICLE VIII. – COMMITTEES

**SECTION 1: Committees Appointed By Chair.** The chair may establish committees, with the approval of the Board of Governors. The Chair will appoint all Committee Chairs. Committees may be composed solely of County Assembly members or partly County Assembly members and partly others, as deemed

appropriate to fulfill the object of this organization outlined in Article I, Section 2. The Chair is an Ex-Officio member of all committees.

**SECTION 2:** Term of Office. Each member of a committee shall serve at the pleasure of the Chair, but no longer than until the next convention or until the committee is terminated.

**SECTION 3:** Removal of any Member of the Committee. Any member of any committee may be removed by the Chair whenever, in their judgment, the best interest of the Party shall be served by that removal.

**SECTION 4:** Standing Committees. The Knox County Party may establish standing committees. Membership of standing committees will follow the same rules and process as above.

### **ARTICLE IX. - BUSINESS AT MEETINGS**

The regular order of business at County Assembly and Board of Governors meetings shall be as follows:

- a. Call to Order
- b. Invocation (optional)
- c. Pledge of Allegiance
- d. Roll call
- e. Reading and approval of the minutes of previous meeting
- f. Treasurer's report
- g. Chair report
- h. Reports of committees
- i. Resolutions
- j. Unfinished business
- k. New business
- l. Elections (if necessary)
- m. Announcements
- n. Adjournment

### **ARTICLE X. – RESOLUTIONS**

All proposed resolutions must be submitted to the chair at least one (1) week prior to a meeting. Emergency resolutions may be brought before the body by consent of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of those present. Resolutions may be adopted by a majority vote of the County Assembly present and voting in favor.

### **ARTICLE XI. - CONTRACTS AND EXPENDITURES**

**SECTION 1:** Contracts; Expenditures; Bill Retention. All County Assemblies are urged to operate under an approved budget. Except in the case of an emergency for items not designated in the budget, no expenditures or bills shall be made or contracts entered into which purport to obligate the County Assembly unless such expenditures or contracts are authorized by a majority vote of those present at a duly called meeting at which a quorum is present. Unexpected expenditures for less than Two Hundred Dollars (\$ 200.) per month, obligating the County Assembly, may be authorized by the chair of the County Assembly. The treasurer shall present a monthly-itemized statement of income and expenditures to County Assembly members. All paid bills shall be retained by the treasurer for a period of five (5) years.

**SECTION 2:** Audits. Auditors shall be designated by the County Assembly, who shall audit and examine the books of accounts of the Knox County Democratic Party and shall certify to the County Assembly the annual balances of the books, which shall be prepared at the close of the fiscal year by or under the direction of the treasurer.

**SECTION 3:** No Knox County Democratic Party funds shall be give, allocated or donated to individuals, groups, or organizations, as determined by the Chair Person not to be in keeping with the purposes of the Knox County Democratic Party.

## **ARTICLE XII. - PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES**

The current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, Newly Revised, shall govern meetings of the County Assembly in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws and any special rules of order which may be adopted.

## **ARTICLE XIII. – AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be amended or substituted by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the total elected membership of the County Assembly. This action must only take place at any meeting of the Executive County Assembly called for the purpose of amending these bylaws. Bylaws changes voted on by the elected membership of the County Assembly must then be submitted to the chair of the TNDP County Party Development Committee for review and approval.

## **ARTICLE XIV. – RULES**

The Knox County Democratic Party is a constituent party of the Tennessee Democratic Party, created by the Tennessee Democratic Party Executive Committee and with the State Democratic Executive Committee having full authority in all matters over the Knox County Democratic Party, including the establishment of minimum standards. Any conflict between the county bylaws and the bylaws of the Tennessee Democratic Party, the bylaws of the Tennessee Democratic Party bylaws prevail.

## **ARTICLE XV. - CONDUCT OF BIENNIAL COUNTY REORGANIZATION CONVENTION**

### **SECTION 1:** Biennial Reorganization Convention

- (a) A Biennial Reorganization Convention of the membership of the Knox County Democratic Party shall be held at the time and date specified by the Board of Governors as per instructed by the Tennessee Democratic Party. The purpose of the Reorganization Convention is to elect Board of Governors members and Officers and adopt the Standard County Bylaws as prescribed by the Tennessee Democratic Party.
- (b) The Reorganization Convention shall have ultimate authority and absolute power over all affairs of the Knox County Party pursuant to the *Constitution and Bylaws*.
- (c) All members of the Knox County Democratic Party who are registered voters in the county and who attest they are bona fide Democrats by execution of pledges or affirmations to that effect



are eligible to be Voting Delegates at the Reorganization Convention and to be candidates for the County Assembly and vote.

- (d) The number of properly authorized Voting Delegates in attendance at the Convention shall constitute a quorum.

**SECTION 2: Prepare for the Reorganization Convention:**

- (a) Prior to the calling of the Biennial Convention, the Chair, in cooperation with the Board of Governors shall appoint the following committees as a minimum:
  - a. Sergeant at Arms Committee;
  - b. Credentials and Rules Committee: Committee to present rules for approval to be used in conducting the Reorganization Convention and to settle grievances.
  - c. Bylaws Committee: Committee to review the Bylaws and recommend changes and adoption at the Reorganization Convention following existing Bylaws.
- (b) The Reorganization Convention shall be well publicized in the local news media, social media, email, radio and other methods available to the County Party seven (7) to fourteen (14) days prior to the convention.

**SECTION 3: Holding Reorganization Convention.** The provisions for the holding of the Biennial County Reorganization Convention shall be as follows:.

- (a) A Biennial Convention of the membership shall be held at the time and date specified by the Tennessee Democratic Party. The purpose of the Convention is to elect Officers and re-adopt the County Bylaws as prescribed by the Tennessee Democratic Party.
- (b) The Convention shall have ultimate authority and absolute power over all affairs of the Party pursuant to the Constitution and Bylaws.
- (c) The number of properly authorized Voting Delegates in attendance at the Convention shall
- (d) constitute a quorum.
- (e) The District Representatives will be elected in a district caucus meeting at the Convention and results announced prior to the election of the officers.
- (f) Prior to calling of the Biennial Convention, the Chair, in cooperation with the other Officers and Board of Governors, shall allocate the number of votes each Precinct shall be entitled to vote at the Convention. The allocation shall be based on a ratio to the vote cast in the preceding Democratic Gubernatorial primary in that Precinct. The Chair shall advise each Precinct Committee of the number of allotted votes.
- (g) In a Precinct Committee meeting prior to the Convention The Precinct Committees shall elect Voting Delegates to the Convention equal to or less than the number of votes allotted. The Committee may also elect a number of Alternates. The Committee Chair shall certify the names of the Voting Delegates and Alternates to the Credentials Committee prior to the Convention; otherwise, the Delegates and Alternates will not be officially recognized. If a person is unable to attend their Precinct's meeting prior to the convention, he/she may still be considered a member of the Precinct delegation and can be elected as a delegate/alternate to the convention, if a written request is sent to the Precinct chair or District Representative prior to the Precinct committee meeting.
- (h) In the event a Voting Delegate to the Convention is not present, the Precinct will not lose the vote provided the Precinct Committee elected an Alternate Delegate who is present to vote at the Convention.

- (i) Participation in the Convention shall be open to all members, but only officially elected Voting Delegates or Alternates may vote.
- (j) On all matters to be voted at the Convention, each Precinct Chair shall poll his/her Delegates prior to the vote, and upon roll call by Precinct, the Chair shall announce the results of this polling, which shall be recorded as the official vote of the Precinct.
- (k) The Convention, voting as a body by a majority vote, may suspend this rule and call for votes to be taken by all assembled Delegates as a body.
- (l) Any member of a Precinct may challenge the organization of his/her Precinct or the method and selection of a Voting Delegate within the Precinct by submitting the complaint to the Credentials Committee, which shall make an investigation and make a decision thereon. The decision of the Credentials Committee shall be final unless the Convention elects to assume jurisdiction of the matter.

**SECTION 4:** Resolve a tie in an intra-party election.

- (a) In case of a tie vote when choosing a member of the Board of Governors, the balloting shall continue to successive ballots. If no decision has been reached after a maximum of five (5) ballots, the Chair of the Knox County Democratic Party shall cast a vote to break the tie.

**OATH OF OFFICE**

I (name) do hereby solemnly promise, before my fellow Democrats, to fulfill the duties of the office to which I have been elected, to the best of my ability. I also promise to support the nominees of the Democratic Party. I further promise that if for any reason I cannot perform these duties I shall resign so that a replacement may be obtained. I also understand that a violation of this oath can result in removal from office.

Adopted on \_\_\_\_\_