

# **The Bylaws of the Democratic Executive Committee of Sarasota County**

## **Preamble**

In regular meeting, **February 14, 2018**, the members of the Democratic Executive Committee of Sarasota County hereby adopted the following Bylaws with amendments to control the operation of said committee.

## **Article I Name**

The name of this political party shall be the Democratic Party of Sarasota County, **which may also be referred to as SCDP.**

## **Article II Governing Body**

The governing body of the Democratic Party of Sarasota County shall be the Democratic Executive Committee of Sarasota County, hereinafter referred to as the DECSC.

## **Article III Creation and Authority**

The DECSC is the organization charged by the Florida Democratic Party with the responsibility for conducting Florida Democratic Party affairs within Sarasota County. The Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party shall govern the DECSC, along with these Bylaws. If these Bylaws conflict with the Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party, then the Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party shall control.

## **Article IV Membership**

The DECSC membership is composed of Democrats registered in Sarasota County and has two membership categories. Category I memberships are defined in Florida Statutes and the By-Laws of the Florida Democratic Party and recognized by the Supervisor of Elections. Category I members are Elected, Automatic, and Appointed

(At-Large). Category II membership is recognized only within the By-Laws of this organization and is Honorary.

### **Category I. Voting Members**

**Section A. Elected Members.** Elected members are those persons who are either:

1. Elected to the office of Precinct Committeeman or Precinct Committeewoman on the ballot in the primary designated by the Florida Statutes in a presidential election year. These members shall take office the first day of the month following each presidential general election and shall serve a term of four years.

2. Elected to the office of Precinct Committeeman or Precinct Committeewoman by the DECSC to fill a vacancy in said office in the precinct in which they reside. Persons who wish to be elected must attend a regular meeting of the DECSC and be introduced. Prospective members must then express their intent by filing an application for membership in the DECSC with the Membership Committee at least 21 days prior to the meeting at which their application is to be acted upon. To be considered for membership prospective members must be present at this meeting, elected by a majority of those present and voting and shall take the oath of office.

Once a person is elected in a precinct, even if that person should move out of that precinct and be appointed at-large or to fill a vacancy in the precinct into which he or she moved, for the purpose of eligibility to seek office in the DECSC, such person shall be classified as an Elected Member for the duration of that term.

3. Special At-large status. This position shall be created for the incumbent Precinct Committeeman or Precinct Committeewoman who moves into a precinct where no vacancy exists in that office. The number of these At-large members shall not be included in the number of appointed members to which the DECSC is entitled. These members shall enjoy voting rights and all privileges of membership.

**Section B. Automatic Members.** Automatic members are those persons who are:

1. Elected Democratic officials within Sarasota County.

2. Presidents of Democratic Clubs **or Caucuses** chartered through the DECSC and by the Florida Democratic Party.

3. Members by virtue of the Florida Statutes.

These members shall take office on the date their official term begins and shall serve only as long as he or she holds the office on which membership on the DECSC is based.

Automatic members shall serve at-large and shall enjoy voting and other privileges of membership except they shall not be officers of the DECSC, unless they are also an

elected member as defined in these Bylaws, nor shall they vote on the question of special meetings.

**Section C. Appointed Members.** Appointed members are those persons who are appointed by the Chair of the DECSC to serve At-large.

Persons who wish to be appointed must attend a regular meeting of the DECSC and be introduced. These persons must be qualified Democratic voters, registered in Sarasota County. Prospective members must then express their intent by filing an application for membership in the DECSC with the Membership Committee at least 21 days prior to the meeting at which their application is to be acted upon. To be considered for membership, prospective members must be present at this meeting; their appointment approved by a majority of those present and voting, and shall take the oath of office.

These members shall take office on the date of the DECSC approval and shall serve for one year. However, their term shall expire immediately prior to the commencement of the next organizational meeting of the DECSC during a Presidential election year. Appointed members may be reappointed by the Chair with the approval of a majority of the members present.

Appointed members shall enjoy voting and other privileges of membership except they shall not be eligible to be officers of the DECSC.

The number of appointed members is limited to ten percent (10%) of the total number of elected members to which the DECSC is entitled.

**Section D. Vacancies.** A position on the DECSC shall be deemed vacant when a member:

1. Accumulates three (3) or more unexcused absences in any one (1) calendar year.
2. Submits a written resignation.
3. Ceases to be a registered Democrat of Sarasota County.
4. Is removed from office.

When a vacancy is deemed to have occurred, and prior to reporting the effective vacancy to the membership, the Chair shall notify the member in writing, who shall have the right to appeal by giving notice to the Chair or Secretary of the DECSC.

## **Category II. Non-Voting Members**

**Honorary Members.** Honorary member may be nominated by any DECSC member and elected by a majority vote of those present and voting. Elected for life, honorary

membership is granted in recognition of sustained, loyal work for the Party. Honorary members may participate in debate but may not vote or hold office.

## **Article V Associate**

**DECSC Associates** are those registered Democrats residing in Sarasota County who wish to make a contribution to the DECSC but have fewer responsibilities than elected or appointed members. Prospective Associates must attend at least one DECSC meeting, be introduced, and must have expressed their intent by filing an application for Associate Status with the Membership Committee at least 21 days prior to the DECSC meeting at which their application is to be acted upon. Prospective Associates must be appointed by the Chair. Associates do not have to take a loyalty oath, do not have attendance requirements, and cannot vote, but may participate in debate at DECSC meetings. The term of an Associate is one year from DECSC approval. However, during a Presidential election year, their term shall expire immediately prior to the commencement of the DECSC Organizational Meeting.

## **Article VI Officers**

### **Section A. Officers**

There shall be **elected from the membership of the DECSC six (6)** executive officers:

- Chair
- First Vice Chair**
- First At-Large Vice Chair**
- Second At-Large Vice Chair**
- Secretary
- Treasurer

There shall be two (2) additional officers of the DECSC **elected from the membership of the DECSC.**

- State Committeeman
- State Committeewoman

**To ensure that the diversity of the Democratic Party is fully recognized, at least one of the At-Large Chairs elected shall be of a different race or ethnic background than the Chair. The At-Large Vice Chairs shall perform such duties and have such responsibilities as directed by the Chair or Executive Committee.**

### **Section B. Chair, First Vice Chair and At-Large Vice Chairs**

The Chair and **First Vice Chair**, when elected at the scheduled biennial elections, must be of opposite gender **identity. The At-Large Vice Chairs elected must be of differing gender identities.** No two officer positions shall be held by the same DECSC member at the same time during the same term.

### **Section C. Duties**

Each officer shall perform the usual and customary duties of his or her office, those assigned by the Florida Statutes and the Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party and the DECSC. It shall be the duty of each officer of the DECSC to become certified as a DEC officer under the Florida Democratic Party or Democratic County Chairs' Association Certification Training consisting of DEC Operations and Coordinated Campaign training within 6 months of taking office, or as available.

1. **Chair.** It shall be the duty of the Chair to: preside at all meetings of the DECSC and of the Steering Committee; appoint the Chairs and the membership of all Standing Committees, the Group chairs and sub-committees within sixty (60) days of assuming office; advise the Secretary of any special meetings in sufficient time for the Secretary to send notice of such meeting to the DECSC membership; approve all checks issued; serve as an ex-officio member of all committees of the DECSC; promulgate an annual precinct organization activity and campaign schedule and campaign budget; serve as the only official spokesperson for the DECSC or to designate a temporary spokesperson; receive resignations of officers and committee members; and excuse members from attendance requirements.

2. **First Vice Chair.** It shall be the duty of the **First Vice Chair** to: a) act during the absence or inability of the Chair to render and perform **their** duties or exercise **their** powers,  
b) serve as an ex-officio member of all committees, and c) perform such other duties as the Chair shall direct.

3. **Secretary.** It shall be the duty of the Secretary to: a) attend and keep minutes and records of all membership meetings of the DECSC and submit copies of said minutes and records to the DECSC and the Florida Democratic Party within 20 days, b) keep, file and report on correspondence related to the DECSC, c) retain a membership list of all the members of the DECSC or proxies and guests, at each meeting of the DECSC, (d) mail written notice of any special meeting at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting except in cases of emergency or as specifically stipulated in these Bylaws; such notice should include an agenda, if possible, and a brief summary of issue items requiring a decision at that meeting, **and** e) perform such other duties as the Chair shall direct.

4. **Treasurer.** It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to: a) deposit any and all funds in such bank(s) as the DECSC may direct, and b) to be responsible for all funds of the DECSC as required by Florida Statutes and the Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party, c) keep a record of all receipts and expenditures, pay all legitimate bills, render an accounting of all receipts and expenditures at each meeting of the DECSC and d) file required reports with the Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections and all municipal clerks, as required, arrange for an annual audit of the financial condition of the DECSC and file a copy of the audit with the Florida Democratic Party and the Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections prior to April 1 of the ensuing year, f)

transfer all records to the successors in office after all accounts have been audited and approved by the appropriate authorities, g) serve on the Ways and Means Committee, and h) perform such other duties as the Chair shall direct.

**5. State Committeeman and State Committeewoman.** It shall be the duty of the State Committeepersons to: a) facilitate communication between the state and local party, take issues from the DECSC to the State Party and report State business to the DECSC, b) participate cooperatively in DECSC activities, c) participate effectively with the Congressional District Caucus of the State Committeepersons, d) reflect, to the best of their knowledge, the wishes of the DECSC in all votes cast, e) keep the DECSC informed of all changes made in the Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party, f) attend all State Executive Committee meetings or, when attendance is not possible, obtain proxies, g) attend all Special State Committee meetings (of which they are members) or when attendance is not possible, obtain proxies, and h) be liaison to all Chartered Democratic Clubs **and Caucuses** of Sarasota County.

#### **Section D. Elections**

The executive officers shall be elected at a biennial election meeting of the DECSC held in the month of December following the presidential and gubernatorial general elections (except when otherwise directed by Florida Statutes or the Charter and Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party) and shall take office immediately upon election. Their term of office shall be two (2) years.

A State Committeeman and a State Committeewoman shall be elected at the DECSC organizational meeting in December following a presidential general election, from among those members elected from the precincts. Their term of office shall be four (4) years and vacancies shall be filled by the DECSC.

A majority of those present and voting is required to elect officers. If there are more than two candidates and no candidate receives a majority of the votes, there shall be an immediate runoff between the two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes.

#### **Section E. Vacancies**

1. A vacancy in any officer position shall be effective immediately upon submission of a resignation to another executive officer of the DECSC or when the officer ceases to be a member of the DECSC.

2. A vacancy in the office of Chair shall be filled by the **First** Vice Chair who shall serve as acting Chair until the vacancy is filled by an election held at a regular meeting at least 25 days after the vacancy occurs, but no longer than 45 days, by a majority of the qualified members present and voting. **A vacancy in any office other than Chair may be filled by the Chair's appointment of a DECSC member to serve in an acting capacity until the vacancy is filled by an election held at a regular meeting at least**

**25 days after the vacancy occurs, but no longer than 45 days, by a majority of the qualified members present and voting.**

3. A vacancy in the position of an incumbent officer who is elected Chair shall be filled at the same meeting, if possible, or within 45 calendar days of the vacancy, by a majority of the members present and voting.

4. In the event of the unexpected absence of both the Chair and **First** Vice Chair at a special or regular meeting, the members may elect one of the elected members of the DECSC to serve as Chair for that meeting or until the Chair or **First** Vice Chair appears and begins to preside.

5. Any officer of the DECSC may be removed from office upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire membership at a regular or special meeting of the same, provided that there shall have been at least ten (10) days written notice of the purpose of said meeting. Such removal may be for cause, including, but not limited to, malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, incompetence, permanent inability to perform official duties, and/or conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude.

## **Article VII Meetings**

**Section A.** During the presidential election years, the DECSC shall hold an organizational meeting to elect the State Committeeman and State Committeewoman, and the **six** executive officers. Also, during the gubernatorial election years, the DECSC shall hold a meeting during the month of December to elect the **six (6)** executive officers.

**Section B.** The DECSC shall meet at least once each month in a regular meeting. The regular meeting shall be held on the second Wednesday of each calendar month at 7:30 p.m., **unless timely notice of a change from the regular schedule is provided DECSC members by email or US Mail.** DEC training meetings will be held as part of the regular membership meetings **at such times as determined by the Chair to be necessary and expedient to achieve the DECSC's purposes and good functioning.**

**Section C.** A special meeting may be called by the Chair, or any fifteen (15) members upon giving no less than ten (10) calendar days' notice by **US Mail**, or e-mail, to **all members of the date, time, place, and matters to be considered/acted upon at such special meeting.** The ten days shall be computed from the date of the mailing of the notice.

**Section D.** During any regular or special meeting, a majority of the elected and appointed members present and voting may call a special meeting. Notice of such meeting shall be mailed, or e-mailed, to each member not in attendance for such vote. The notice shall comply with requirements of Section C as to place, time, and matters to be considered.

**Section E.** For any meeting, a member may designate a proxy. The proxy must be a registered Democrat residing in the same area of representation, and not a member of the DECSC. A written statement designating the proxy and the meeting must be either witnessed and signed by two registered Democrats, or subscribed before a notary public, and delivered to the Chair of the DECSC prior to the meeting.

**Section F.** Forty percent (40%) of the current membership is a quorum. **Before any business is conducted at any meeting, the Secretary and/or their designee shall provide a list of all prospective members eligible for the DECSC at that time.** The attendance record of each meeting of the DECSC shall be maintained as an official record of the DECSC. Absent a quorum at any meeting, a majority of those members present and voting may adjourn to the next regular meeting or a special meeting. If the adjournment is to a special meeting, notice as described in Section C must be mailed, or e-mailed to each member not present at the time of such adjournment vote. Proxies shall be counted for quorum purposes, but shall not be counted for the purpose of avoiding the statutory mandate of forfeiture of office for failure to attend DECSC regular meetings.

**Section G.** The Chair may appoint a Parliamentarian, refer to **the Parliamentarian** points of order and interpretations of rules and these Bylaws and may adopt the opinions of the Parliamentarian as the ruling of the Chair. However, any member may appeal the ruling to the DECSC pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

**Section H.** Procedures not controlled by Florida Statute, the Charter or Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party, or these Bylaws shall conform to Robert's Rules of Order, Revised. **The DECSC may, by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, adopt special rules to organize discussion and voting on resolutions brought before the DECSC.**

**Section I.** The Chair, in conjunction with the Steering Committee, shall set the agenda for any meeting subject to change by majority of the members present and voting. The agenda shall be presented to the members prior to the beginning of each meeting.

**Section J.** All meetings of the DECSC shall be handicapped accessible.



**Article VIII**  
**Groups and Standing Committees**

**The DECSC shall establish the following Committees to further the goals and policies of the Sarasota County Democratic Party and the FDP:**

**Section A.** Standing Committees of the DECSC are: **the Executive Committee**, the Steering Committee, and committees. Each **committee** chair shall determine their objectives subject to review by the Steering Committee and approval of the DECSC. The Chair shall appoint the committee chairs from among the members of the DECSC. Members of each committee within each group shall be appointed by the Chair and/or **committee** chairs. The Chair and **committee** chairs may assign to each committee such duties as are compatible and consistent with these Bylaws. Each committee shall keep records of the meetings held and any votes taken, maintain minutes and attendance records, and shall submit these reports of its activities to the Steering Committee and the DECSC each month.

**1. Executive Committee**

**The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the DECSC, together with the immediate past Chair of the DECSC, who shall be an honorary, nonvoting member. The Executive Committee shall exercise, as necessary, the executive and administrative functions of the DECSC between meetings, except those reserved to the Steering Committee and the DECSC by these Bylaws. Meetings may be called, at the discretion of the Chair or by the Chair, upon the written request of a majority of the voting members of the Committee, upon 48 hours' notice, by email or other form of verifiable electronic communication. As circumstances may require, notice may be waived, upon the written consent of not less than a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Further, as circumstances may require, in the discretion of the Chair, votes may be taken by email, text message or other form of verifiable electronic communication; provided, however, that a written record of all actions taken shall be prepared within ten (10) calendar days from the date of such action, and copies furnished to all members. Summaries of all meetings or proceedings shall be furnished to the members within ten (10) calendar days from the date of such meeting or proceeding, and copies furnished to all members.**

**2. Steering Committee.**

The Chair of the DECSC shall be the Chair of the Steering Committee. The membership shall include the executive officers of the DECSC, State Committeepersons, chartered club **and caucus** presidents, and the chairs of the subcommittees. This committee is charged with **advising and reporting to Chair and Executive Committee upon the activities of the members of the member Clubs, Caucuses, Committees** the DECSC of the accomplishments or failures of the committees, recommending activities and procedures and reviewing reports, positions or statements to be made in the name of the DECSC by any member or committee, except the Chair and Vice Chair. The

Chair in conjunction with the Steering Committee, shall prepare the agenda for the DECSC.

### **3. Affirmative Action Committee**

**The Affirmative Action Committee shall work in conjunction with the FDP Affirmative Action Committee to promote the rights and advancement of disadvantaged persons and minority groups.**

### **4. Young Democrats Committee**

**The Young Democrats Committee shall work with the Florida Young Democrats to attract and engage young persons to participate actively in the Democratic Party.**

**Section B.** The Chair may appoint ad hoc committees as he or she sees fit and may assign any duties that do not impede the work of the standing committees.

## **Article IX Duties and Responsibilities of DECSC Members**

The objective of the DECSC is to obtain the highest possible number of Democratic votes in each election and elect Democratic candidates to public office.

It is the duty and responsibility of DECSC members to:

1. Attend each meeting session of the DECSC.
2. Contact all Democrats in their precinct, at a minimum, prior to every general election.
3. Participate in obtaining the highest possible Democratic registration and voter turnout.
4. Encourage and facilitate Democrats' voting by absentee ballot.
5. Contribute to and/or raise funds for the DECSC or plan precinct fundraisers.
6. Assist in filling vacancies in precinct committee offices as they may occur.
7. Report any change of residence to the DECSC and to the Supervisor of Elections no later than thirty (30) days after such change is effective.

**Article X**  
**Membership Lists and Minutes**

**Section A.** The names, addresses and type of membership of each DECSC member and officer shall be kept by the Secretary and shall be available once per year, with additions and corrections given monthly. Additional copies will be made available to members at the cost of copying.

**Section B.** The minutes of all meetings shall be kept by the Secretary and shall be presented at the next meeting for approval. If the minutes are mailed, or e-mailed, to committee members, they may be approved without reading at the next meeting. Copies shall be sent to the State Chair as required by the Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party.

**Article XI**  
**Finances and Audit**

The Treasurer shall maintain the books of the DECSC. There shall be an annual audit of the financial condition of the DECSC for each calendar year in compliance with applicable Federal Laws and the Florida Statutes and conducted by a qualified examiner or examiners who shall not be members of the DECSC.

**Article XII**  
**Loyalty Oath**

Members of the DECSC shall subscribe to the loyalty oath prescribed by the Florida Democratic Party.

**Article XIII**  
**Removal of Members for Cause**

Any member of the DECSC, elected or appointed, may be removed from office upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire membership at a regular or special meeting of same provided that there shall have been at least ten (10) days written notice of the purpose of said meeting. Such removal may be for cause, including, but not limited to, malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, incompetence, permanent inability to perform official duties, and/or conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude.

## **Article XIV Amendments**

The Bylaws of the DECSC may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote. Any proposed amendments shall be published in the minutes of the meeting preceding the meeting at which the vote is to be taken. Any proposed amendment(s) shall be mailed to all members at least fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the meeting at which the vote is to be taken, and made available for perusal by reasonable request. The Secretary of the DECSC shall receive a copy of any amendment(s) at the time they are mailed to members.

Revisions Approved at the **February 14, 2018** DECSC meeting.