



## **Rules and Bylaws of the Harris County Democratic Party**

*As amended and approved by the Harris County Democratic Party County Executive Committee on March 23, 2025.*

### **ARTICLE I - RULES OF ORDER**

All meetings of the Harris County Democratic Party Executive Committee (CEC) shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised except as it may be otherwise provided herein or as provided in the Rules of the Texas Democratic Party (TDP Rules), and applicable laws of the State of Texas (State Law), including, without limitation, the Texas Election Code.

### **ARTICLE II - QUORUM**

Twenty-five percent of the members (exclusive of any vacancies) of the CEC of the Harris County Democratic Party (HCDP) being present at any meeting shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting any business that might come before the CEC unless State Law or the TDP Rules specifically provide other quorum requirements. The quorum requirements for other committees of the HCDP shall be the same.

### **ARTICLE III - MEETINGS**

1. Regular meetings of the CEC shall be held as required by State Law and the TDP Rules. Special meetings shall be held either upon a call by the County Chair, or upon the written petition of fifty-one percent of the qualified members (exclusive of vacancies) of the CEC presented to the County Chair.
2. The Presiding Officer of a CEC meeting may appoint a qualified individual to serve as parliamentarian.
3. Notice of all CEC meetings, regular or special, shall be given to each member of the CEC which shall be given at least ten days before the day of the meeting, and otherwise comply with the Rules of the TDP.
4. Resolutions, minutes of the last meeting, written reports of standing committees, proposed budgets, audit reports, and documents relating to other matters expected to be considered at a CEC meeting and for which a written document is required for the item to be considered, copies of the latest budget passed by the CEC, and copies of all TEC reports and FEC reports filed since the last CEC meeting shall be made available to CEC members for review at the meeting venue for at least one hour before the meeting begins. For Remote and Hybrid Meetings, as defined below, such documents will be made available (at least an hour before the meeting begins) via an internet link, except documents which,

- a. contains information of a financial, legal, or strategic nature which has not been publicly revealed or included in a publicly available record or report (Confidential Documents) or
- b. contains proprietary information the public disclosure of which would violate an agreement with the owner or source of such information (Confidential Documents), and except documents relating to personnel or disciplinary matters.

5. During the thirty days before a proposed budget is to be considered by the CEC, the County Chair and HCDP staff will conduct at least two non-public Remote Meetings for precinct chairs and non-precinct chair members of the Steering Committee only, in which the County Chair will review and explain the proposed budget in-depth, including any modifications proposed by the Finance Committee, and entertain and respond to questions and comments from the participants in the meeting. In addition, with respect to other Confidential Documents, at the Steering Committee meeting prior to a CEC meeting, the County Chair and HCDP staff will review and explain the document in-depth, including any modifications proposed by a relevant standing committee, and entertain and respond to questions and comments from the participants in the meeting. The portion of the Steering Committee meeting which deals with a Confidential Document shall be non-public and include only precinct chairs and non-precinct chair members of the Steering Committee as participants and members of the HCDP staff assisting in the conduct of the meeting.

6. Information contained in Confidential Documents (“Confidential Information”) shall not be shared in whole or in part with anyone who is not a precinct chair, a non-precinct chair member of the Steering Committee, a staffer employed by the HCDP, a professional providing services to the HCDP which require access to or involve Confidential Information, or another person approved by the Chair of the HCDP to have access to Confidential Information on a “need to know” basis (giving regard to, and respecting, the necessity to preserve the confidentiality of information of a financial, legal, strategic, or proprietary nature). Violation of this rule can lead to disciplinary action by the CEC. Anything anywhere in these Rules and ByLaws to the contrary notwithstanding or in conflict herewith, Confidential Documents will not be copied or photographed in any manner or distributed, including electronically, except that the County Chair may do so, or direct or authorize others to do so, when the Chair concludes that it is in the best interest of the Party to do so (such as in the ordinary course of business with Party staffers, or as necessary to comply with governmental regulations or process, or in communicating with professionals (such as lawyers representing the Party or accountants) about HCDP matters or affairs. Information which is publicly available on the website of the Texas Ethics Commission or the Federal Election Commission, or reports based on such information, is neither Confidential Information nor (to the extent they are publicly available on those websites) Confidential Documents and is not subject to the prohibitions of the immediately preceding sentence.

7 Unless they die, resign, or become ineligible or disqualified to continue to serve, members of all standing committees except the Audit Committee shall serve until the end of the term of the CEC which approved them. Members of the Audit Committee shall serve until the second regular quarterly meeting of the CEC whose term most recently began (being the CEC meeting at which the Audit Committee’s report for the preceding year is due to be presented according to Section VII(8)(e) of these Rules, generally occurring in September of that even-numbered year). Should presentation to the CEC of the audit report not occur at the first meeting of the CEC meeting after August 10 in an even-numbered year, the then serving members of the Audit Committee will continue to serve as voting members until the audit report for the preceding year is presented to the CEC. Members of the Audit Committee must continue to be eligible, qualified precinct chairs, however, in order to continue to serve on the Committee, either as voting members or non-voting members. All meetings of the CEC,

the Steering Committee, and all Standing and Ad Hoc Committees shall be open and accessible to all persons who wish to attend, except for portions of meeting where matters of a financial, legal, or strategic nature (which have not previously been publicly revealed or included in a publicly available record or report) or proprietary information the public disclosure of which would violate an agreement with the owner or source, or personnel documents or information, or disciplinary matters, are being discussed, which portions of the applicable meeting can be closed to the public and to anyone else other than a member of the CEC or an HCDP staffer assisting with the conduct of the meeting or an individual who has been requested to present or discuss such confidential information to or with the committee at that meeting. Persons in attendance at meeting who are not members of the committee then meeting may, at the discretion of the chair or other person presiding over the meeting, be allowed to participate in the discussions of the committee during open sessions, and, if authorized to attend “closed,” non-public portions of the meeting, in the discussions during those portions of the meeting, but may not make motions or vote on issues on which a committee vote is taken.

8. The following additional provisions shall apply to Remote and Hybrid Meetings:

- a. Committee members who participate remotely shall count for voting and quorum purposes.
- b. The notice for Remote and Hybrid Meetings shall:
  - i. state the date, time, platform(s) (including links to any virtual method(s) of participating in the meeting) and contact information for the meeting.
  - ii. include options for attendees who do not have electronic access.
  - iii. include an e-mail address where participants may submit questions before the meeting; and,
  - iv.. include a contact phone number where participants with disabilities or without access to the technology that will be utilized for the meeting, can obtain assistance in participating in the meeting.
- c. All members at the meeting must be recognized by the Chair prior to speaking, and no more than one person shall speak at the same.
- c. The following applies to voting at a CEC Remote or Hybrid Meeting:
  - i. Votes shall be conducted and recorded by a method which produces a record of who voted and how they voted, such as by an on-line polling system (persons participating by telephone conference call may vote by email).
  - ii. For votes cast at a CEC meeting, HCDP will post the result totals on its website promptly after the meeting and will give Congressional District chairs the names and votes of each voting member in their respective district.
  - iii. There is no proxy voting at CEC meetings. A statement shall be required from the voter certifying that the person casting the ballot is the actual precinct chair or other authorized voter and not someone acting on their behalf.
- d. Newly appointed precinct chairs may be sworn in through audio or video technology.
- e. The general public may view the virtual meeting through a live stream service of the HCDP’s choosing except where TDP or HCDP Rules permit the closing of portions of the meeting to the general public.

9. There shall be no secret ballots because secret ballots are forbidden by TDP Rules.

## **ARTICLE IV - RECORDS**

All records of the CEC including but not limited to minutes of meetings, reports of

committees, candidate filing forms, returns of elections, checkbooks, bank statements, accounting records, and official correspondence and contracts shall be maintained at the headquarters of the HCDP and if no such headquarters exist, then in a location agreed upon by the Chair and Secretary of the HCDP, and under their joint custody, and shall be available to the inspection of any member of the CEC. The financial books and records of the HCDP shall be maintained in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), except where rules of the Texas Election Commission, the Federal Elections Commission, or the Texas Secretary of State require otherwise.

If the Party does not produce such records for inspection by the requesting precinct chair (or a requesting non-precinct chair member of the Steering Committee) within 14 calendar days after the date the request is received, it must provide a written explanation to the requesting individual within that time, signed by the County Chair, detailing why the requested records could not be made available for inspection within the 14-day period of time and stating with specificity when the inspection can occur. A copy of that written explanation shall be presented to the next meeting of the Steering Committee, and a requesting precinct chair may (but is not required to) address the next meeting of the CEC concerning the Party's failure to provide access to the requested record(s) within the 14-day period. Any time (1) during the 30 days immediately preceding (a) a primary or general election (or runoff) or (b) the deadline for candidates to file Applications for a Place on the Primary Election Ballot, or (2) during which the HCDP headquarters are closed shall not be counted in determining compliance with the 14-day deadline.

## **ARTICLE V – FINANCE/FUNDRAISING**

1. All money that may be received by the CEC through any of its members or officers shall be deposited to an account or accounts of the CEC with a financial institution as may be directed by the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Two approvals (two signatures on checks) out of the three aforementioned officers shall be necessary for all expenditures in amounts of over \$10,000, or such lesser amount as may be established by the CEC. Creation of any debt, liability, or financial obligation in excess of \$10,000 to any single vendor, lender, contractor, supplier, landlord, lessor, or creditor within a twelve month period of time must be specifically approved by the CEC (or the Steering Committee acting on behalf of the CEC where action needs to be taken before the next regularly scheduled CEC meeting), even if such item has been generally approved by the CEC in its last budget. Authorization to incur such obligation constitutes approval by the CEC to expend funds to repay it.
2. The CEC shall have a fiscal year commencing on January 1 and ending on December 31.
3. The CEC shall adopt a budget each December covering operations through the adoption of the next budget pursuant to the procedure set forth below. Adoption of the budget shall constitute authorization to spend up to the amount specified for each category of expenditures. Expenditure of funds by the CEC, unless otherwise specified by State Law, shall require the approval of at least fifty-one percent of its members present.
4. No later than October 10 of each year, the County Chair will submit to the Finance/Fundraising Committee (Finance Committee) for review and approval of, or recommendation of modification(s) to a proposed budget. The budget will cover all anticipated expenditures and revenues, by category of expenditure and revenue, in reasonable and specific detail with a line-item amount for each category of

expenditures. If the County Chair's budget is approved, or the County Chair agrees with the changes recommended by the Finance Committee, the budget will be submitted to the Steering Committee, which shall include it on the CEC meeting agenda. If the County Chair and the Finance Committee fail to agree on a budget, both the County Chair's budget (including any changes recommended by the Finance Committee with which the County Chair agrees) and the Finance Committee's recommended modifications, will be submitted to the CEC and the CEC will decide the matter.

5. When a new County Chair takes office (after December 31, 2023), that person will, within 90 days after taking office, submit to the Finance/Fundraising Committee a proposed budget for the remainder of the fiscal year (the Revised Budget). Thereafter, the procedure described above will apply for consideration and adoption of the Revised Budget.

6. If a new budget has not been approved by the CEC by December 31 because of lack of a quorum at the CEC meeting called to approve the budget or because of an extraordinary circumstance beyond the Party's reasonable control (such as a major weather event or other emergency which necessitates postponement of a planned CEC meeting), the existing budget will be automatically extended and continued until a new budget is approved by the CEC. During this interval, the Party is authorized to expend funds at the spending levels established by the budget for the fiscal year just ended, pro-rated on a monthly basis (1/12th of the approved annual amount) for each category of expenditure.

7. Budget proposals not included in either the County Chair's budget or the Finance Committee's modifications, and amendments to the budget adopted by CEC, cannot be acted upon by the CEC until they have been presented to both the County Chair and the Finance Committee, in writing, at least thirty days prior to their being considered by the CEC. The budget proposals and amendments will be placed on the agenda of the first CEC meeting occurring at least thirty days after they have been submitted to the County Chair and the Finance Committee.

8. When it becomes apparent that anticipated revenue is unlikely to materialize in the amounts required by the budget or that expenditures will likely exceed the budgeted amount in any category of expenditure, the County Chair will promptly report to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will develop proposals to adjust for such circumstances. In addition, the County Chair will report to the CEC (in non-public session) at each CEC meeting and to the Steering Committee at each Steering Committee (in non-public session) at each Steering Committee meeting immediately preceding a CEC meeting at which such report is required to be made, concerning any expenditures and revenues to date in the fiscal year, which appear to be materially greater or less than those authorized in the budget approved by the CEC.

9. Only members of the Finance Committee, precinct chairs, the County Chair and HCDP staff, may participate in the Finance Committee's discussions about the budget; however, only voting members of the Finance Committee may vote. All discussions about the budget shall be non-public. Unless objected to by a majority of the voting members of the Finance Committee present, the Finance Committee chair may allow other individuals to address and engage with the committee.

## **ARTICLE VI - STEERING COMMITTEE**

1. The Steering Committee shall be composed of the following persons:
  - a. County Chair
  - b. Secretary

- c. Treasurer
- d. Chairs of the Congressional District Committees resident in Harris County
- e. Secretaries of the Congressional District Committees resident in Harris County
- f. Chairs of all Standing Committees and the Deputy Chair of the Primary Committee
- g. Any Democratic National Committee (DNC) members from Harris County. DNC Members shall be non-voting, ex-officio members of the Steering Committee
- h. A person designated by the County Chair as General Counsel to the HCDP, who shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Steering Committee.
- i. State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC) members from every Congressional District who reside in Harris County
- j. Add-on members of the SDEC who reside in Harris County
- k. Three At-Large members of the Steering Committee appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the County Chair.

2. The Steering Committee shall be an Advisory Committee to the County Chair and shall act on behalf of the CEC in between meetings of the CEC as necessary to approve expenditures, adopt resolutions on behalf of the HCDP (subject to being rescinded at the next meeting of the CEC), or other activities on behalf of the CEC, and shall serve as the Agenda Committee for the CEC. The Steering Committee members who are not CEC members may participate fully in CEC meetings except for voting and except that the person presiding over a meeting of the Steering Committee (including the County Chair), may vote to break a tie, but only in that circumstance.

3. The date, time and venue of Steering Committee meetings shall be posted on the HCDP online calendar by direction of the County Chair and noticed by e-mail to the committee members at least one week in advance, except in cases of emergencies, when as much advance notice as possible will be given and may be given in person, by email or by telephone. If a committee member has notified the chair of the committee that they do not have an e-mail address, they shall be notified by telephone. Where action can be taken by the Steering Committee, such action can be approved (or rejected) by e-mail, so long as a majority of members of the Steering Committee who are entitled to vote (excluding the County Chair from the number of voting members who are entitled to vote) approve such action via e-mail, and the chair concludes that the e-mail votes appear to be legitimate.

4. As part of the agenda approval process, the Steering Committee will establish, at each pre-CEC-meeting Steering Committee meeting, the procedure which will govern the manner in which elected officials and candidates will be introduced at that meeting, whether statements or speeches from any of them will be allowed, and, if so, the time limits which will control those addresses.

5 If the Steering Committee fails to establish different procedures for a given meeting, the following "Default Guidelines" will apply:

- a) All candidates who are personally present will be introduced by name, position they are seeking, and incumbent or non-incumbent status only.
- b) All elected officials (other than precinct chairs and judges or justices) who are present will be permitted to address the meeting for no longer than one minute each.
- c) If an elected official (other than a judge or justice) is not present but has sent a representative who has informed the Chair before the meeting is called to order that he or she is there to speak on behalf of the absent elected official, that person may speak on

behalf of the elected official (for no longer than one minute).

d) If an elected official (or a representative on such official's behalf) spoke and that elected official is being opposed on the ballot by a candidate seeking the official's position, the opposing candidate may address the meeting for no longer than one minute.

e) Unless the Steering Committee provides otherwise for that particular meeting, no other candidates or elected officials may address the meeting personally or through a representative (except solely in a ceremonial capacity, such as leading the pledge of allegiance or administering an oath of office).

6) For each CEC meeting, the Steering Committee will designate one of its members to consult with the County Chair and, if the two of them agree, modify the ground rules adopted by the Steering Committee for a particular meeting (or the Default Guidelines, if they apply to that particular meeting) if unforeseen circumstances arise indicating to the Chair and the Steering Committee designee that a deviation from the parameters adopted by the Steering Committee for that meeting is called for (such as if an out-of-county candidate or a "major" elected official unexpectedly shows up at the meeting, or a judicial candidate has an important message which needs to be delivered to the CEC, or there are only a small number of elected officials present at the meeting so slightly longer presentations will not unduly prolong the proceedings).

## **ARTICLE VII - STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. All standing committees shall consist of no fewer than eight members (excluding the chair and members from congressional districts containing fewer than 50 precincts in Harris County). Members of standing committees (other than the chairs thereof) shall be nominated by the respective congressional districts of the nominees and approved by the CEC. There shall be at least one member from each congressional district having at least 50 precincts in Harris County on each standing committee, but no more than four voting members per congressional district (excluding the chair). If a standing committee lacks at least one member from any given congressional district (other than a district containing fewer than 50 precincts within Harris County), the chair of the otherwise unrepresented (on that committee) congressional district shall automatically serve as a voting member of that committee until such time as some other person from that congressional district is nominated by the Steering Committee and approved by the CEC to serve as a member of that standing committee. Congressional district committee chairs are urged diligently to seek at least one qualified person from their congressional district to serve on each standing committee.

Members of the Finance/Fundraising Committee and the Audit Committee (including their chairs) must be members of the CEC (precinct chairs or the County Chair), non-precinct chair members of the Steering Committee, or staff persons employed by the HCDP. Members of other standing committees (including their chairs) need not be members of the CEC.

Anyone who has publicly announced an intention to become a candidate for office (other than precinct chair or County Chair) in an upcoming primary election may not serve (or continue to serve) as chair or deputy chair of a standing committee nor as a member of the Audit, Finance/Fundraising or Primary Committees.

2. By statute, the County Chair is the chair of the Primary Committee. The rest of the standing committee chairs and the deputy chair of the Primary Committee shall be appointed exclusively

pursuant to the following procedure. The County Chair shall nominate at a CEC meeting a person of his or her sole choosing for each standing committee chair position (other than chair of the Primary Committee) and for deputy chair of the Primary Committee. The nominee need not be a member of the standing committee before being nominated to be its chair (or deputy chair of the Primary Committee) and need not be approved before nomination at the CEC meeting by anyone. However, the County Chair shall notify the Steering Committee prior to the CEC meeting at which the committee chair will be nominated of the name of the person the County Chair intends to nominate to chair a standing committee, so Steering Committee members may ask questions about the suitability of that prospective nominee to become chair of the standing committee and communicate to the County Chair any reservations Steering Committee members may have about such prospective nominee. That notification and discussion process notwithstanding, selection of the person to be nominated to be chair of each standing committees (or deputy chair of the Primary Committee) remains the exclusive province of the County Chair, who is free to accept or reject the views of members of the Steering Committee in that regard, and no vote of the Steering Committee shall be required or taken with regard to any nominee to any standing committee chairpersonship or deputy chairpersonship.

If the person nominated by the County Chair receives a majority vote of precinct chairs voting for that position at the CEC meeting, that nominee is the chair (or deputy chair in the case of the Primary Committee) of the applicable committee. If the nominee does not receive a majority vote, the County Chair shall nominate another person. This shall continue until all standing committee chair positions and the position of deputy chair of the Finance Committee are filled. Each standing committee (except for the Primary Committee) may, in its discretion, elect a deputy chair and/or a secretary. The deputy chair so elected shall serve as chair of the committee in the absence of the chair, except that if the position of chair of a committee is or becomes vacant, the County Chair may appoint an interim chair (who may be, and ordinarily should be, but is not required to be, the deputy chair of the committee), which interim chair will serve as the chair of the standing committee until the next meeting of the CEC.

3. Unless they die, resign, or become ineligible or disqualified to continue to serve, members of standing committees shall serve until the end of the term of the CEC which approved them. They shall, however, become ineligible to serve, or to continue to serve, as a member of a standing committee (a) once they become a candidate for any elective office of the federal, state, or county government (but not if they become a candidate for city or school district office or office of a political party, such as precinct chair or County Chair), or (b) if they cease to be a qualified voter of Harris County, Texas. In case of a vacancy occurring on any of the standing committees by reason of death, resignation, or legal disqualification, said vacancy shall be filled by the same manner used to select the person vacating such position. Additional members of standing committees may be selected from time to time in the same manner; however, each congressional district is limited to four voting members per congressional district on each committee.

4. The County Chair and the General Counsel to the HCDP shall be ex officio members, without vote, on all standing committees. However, a General Counsel who is approved by the CEC to be on a committee as a representative of that person its Congressional District shall have in that capacity full voting rights on that committee. The Treasurer shall be an ex-official member, without a vote, on the Finance/Fundraising Committee.

5. Each standing committee (except the Primary Committee) must meet a minimum of once per quarter. The meeting date, time and venue shall be posted on the HCDP online calendar by direction of the County Chair and noticed by email to the standing committee members at least one week in



advance, except in cases of emergencies, when as much advance notice as possible will be given. If a committee member has notified the chair of the committee that they do not have an email address, they shall be notified by telephone. Where action can be taken by a standing committee, such action can be approved (or rejected) by e-mail, so long as a majority of members of the committee approve such action via e-mail, and the chair concludes that the e-mail votes appear to be legitimate.

6. The Standing Committees shall provide a report (either in writing or orally) to the Steering Committee and to the CEC of its activities since the last such meeting and its plans (including projects) for the future.

7. Though autonomous and, unlike HCDP, allowed to endorse candidates in primary elections, Democratic clubs and organizations must assist the Party in seeking to assure that members of the public are not misled into believing that endorsements of candidates in a primary election are those of the Harris County Democratic Party. Therefore, any Democratic club or organization which endorses candidates in a primary election must refuse to endorse, or promptly withdraw an endorsement previously given, if a candidate is endorsed by any entity using a name deceptively similar to "Harris County Democratic Party" or "HCDP," and not promptly disavowed or rejected by the candidate endorsed, or if the candidate affirmatively seeks endorsement from an organization which the candidate knows is planning to use a confusing or deceitful moniker in announcing or promoting its endorsement(s), or has done so. Any Democratic club or organization which fails to take such steps upon being notified by the HCDP chair to do so, shall thereafter be prohibited from using HCDP facilities or from listing events or activities on the HCDP's website or newsletters until the HCDP chair concludes that such restrictions are no longer necessary to vindicate the Party's interests. Further, failure to follow these requirements may lead to CEC withdrawal of approval of such club as an HCDP recognized organization.

Any candidate who either seeks, or receives and does not promptly reject or disavow, an endorsement in a primary election knowing it has been or will be used in a manner which creates the misimpression it is the endorsement of the Harris County Democratic Party or of the HCDP will not be allowed to address any meeting of the HCDP or any committee thereof, until the primary election (including any runoff) is concluded, and such a candidate may not use the HCDP website to promote his or her candidacy in any way.

8. The Standing Committees of the CEC are as follows:

a. **RULES COMMITTEE.** Subject to approval by the CEC, the Rules Committee shall (a) prepare the rules for the conduct of all meetings of the CEC and all committees of the HCDP, (b) review the Rules and Bylaws of the HCDP from time to time and propose changes, revisions, or additions thereto, and (c) propose such other rules, or modifications to existing rules, concerning the conduct of the business and activities of the HCDP as the committee may deem appropriate.

The Rules Committee shall also receive, investigate, and consider complaints filed against precinct chairs. If deemed warranted, the Rules Committee shall, upon written notice, conduct a hearing affording the accused precinct chairs a fair opportunity to be heard. After the completion of the hearing, the Rules Committee shall make recommendations to the CEC concerning appropriate discipline, if any, to be imposed against a precinct chair who has violated the Rules of the HCDP, the TDP, or State Law. Disciplinary hearings will be

conducted pursuant to the rules and procedures promulgated by the Rules Committee and approved by the Steering Committee.

b. **PRIMARY COMMITTEE.** The Primary Committee shall carry out all those functions provided by State Law relating to the administration of the Party's Primary. In addition, the Primary Committee shall make recommendations to the CEC regarding proposed changes to the Election Code for consideration by the CEC for action thereon.

c. **RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE.** The Resolutions Committee shall study proposed policy resolutions (that is, formal expressions of the position of the HCDP on issues of public concern) to be offered to the CEC. All proposed policy resolutions (which excepts administrative resolutions such as those necessary in the regular course of the CEC's business) shall be submitted in writing to the Resolutions Committee at least two weeks in advance of a Steering Committee meeting. If recommended by the Resolutions Committee, the resolutions shall be forwarded to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall determine which policy resolutions will be included on the CEC meeting agenda. Resolutions which are not included on the agenda will be referred back to the Resolutions Committee with written guidance on why they were not included. No policy resolutions and no amendments to policy resolutions may be offered from the floor at a CEC meeting. If a matter arises at a time which makes impractical submission of a resolution to the CEC in accordance with the procedures outlined above, the proposed resolution can be submitted to the County Chair by the Resolutions Committee for referral to the Steering Committee for disposition pursuant to Article VI.2. If time constraints make it impractical for a proposed resolution to be considered by the Resolutions Committee and the need for or desirability of such a resolution being acted upon by the Resolutions Committee could not reasonably have been foreseen or on the County Chair's determination that a proposed resolution presents an extraordinarily important issue which needs action by the Steering Committee before the Resolutions Committee can reasonably be expected to be able to consider an act on it, the County Chair may, in his or her discretion, submit to the Steering Committee without prior recommendation from the Resolutions Committee a proposed resolution presented to him by three members of the CEC. All resolutions adopted by the CEC (or by the Steering Committee pursuant to Article VI.2) will be published on the HCDP website.

d. **FINANCE/FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE.** The Finance/Fundraising Committee is responsible for reviewing, commenting on, and approving or recommending changes to the budget prepared by the County Chair, and for raising the funds needed to finance the HCDP's operations.

e. **AUDIT COMMITTEE.** The Audit Committee shall review the books and records and accounts of the HCDP and no later than August 10 of each year, submit to the County Chair a written report of the results of its examination for the fiscal year ended on the immediately preceding December 31 (including a detailed report of compliance with or variances from the budget). The report also will be presented by the Audit Committee (in a non-public session) (i) to the CEC at its first meeting after August 10, for such action, if any, as the CEC deems necessary or appropriate in view of the report, including acting upon any recommendations contained in the report, and (ii) to the Steering Committee at its meeting immediately preceding such CEC meeting. The Audit Committee shall also perform such other functions, such as

reporting to the CEC non-compliance by precinct chairs with CEC meeting attendance requirements, as the CEC or the County Chair direct may direct.

f. **PRECINCT CHAIR SUPPORT COMMITTEE.** Precinct Chair Support Committee's purpose will be to design, develop, and facilitate initiatives to maximize the effectiveness of precinct chairs and strengthen and recognize precinct chairs as the foundation of the Party, in areas including, but not limited to technology, standards and measurements; calendar of suggested activities; communications; and printing.

g. **AD-HOC COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES.** The County Chair may establish other, ad-hoc committees as he/she deems appropriate and may appoint committee members who are not members of the CEC. The County Chair may remove any member of any Ad-Hoc committee (including the chair thereof) at any time, with or without cause, at the discretion of the County Chair. Membership on Ad-Hoc committees do not end or terminate at any particular time or at the end of the term of any CEC, but shall continue until terminated by the County Chair then in office. Standing Committees and Ad-Hoc Committees may create subcommittees as they deem appropriate.

9. Upon the vote of twenty percent of the voting members of any committee, a minority report can be prepared and presented to the Steering Committee and/or the CEC provided all other procedures and requirements mandated by these Rules have been complied with. The HCDP will facilitate such compliance. In addition, the County Chair will report to the CEC (in non-public session) at each CEC meeting, and at to the Steering Committee at each Steering Committee meeting immediately preceding a CEC meeting at which such report is required to be made, concerning any expenditures and revenues to date in the fiscal year, which appear to be materially greater or less than those authorized in the budget approved by the CEC.”

10. Further, in keeping with the policy of the Harris County Democratic Party strictly to maintain complete neutrality, and the appearance thereof, in contested Democratic primary races, all members of all HCDP standing committees, including the chairs thereof, shall recuse themselves and not participate in consideration of, nor vote on, any matter which might personally advantage that person in, or bear upon, a primary race in which that person and another Democrat have both publicly declared an intention to seek nomination, or reasonably appear to do so. For example, a committee member (including a committee chair) should not seek a resolution approving a position his or her Democratic opponent has publicly opposed, or vice versa. Nor should the committee member (including its chair) participate in consideration of a proposal to sanction or condemn a Democratic opponent or budget proposals concerning campaign expenditures.

11. At the discretion of the chair of a standing committee, votes of the committee may be conducted, from time to time, via email. If an email vote is conducted, the chair of the committee must inform the voting members of the deadline for casting ballots (to be chosen by the chair in his or her discretion). Matters submitted to an email vote will be deemed to be rejected if a majority of the voting members of the committee do not affirmatively approve the matter, by email, by the deadline. The chair of the committee must conclude that an email vote appears to be legitimate for it to be counted.

## **ARTICLE VIII DEMOCRATIC CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

1. Democratic clubs are autonomous independent organizations not subject to the control or supervision of the Harris County Democratic Party. However, the HCDP may:
  - a. permit the clubs to use its facilities from time to time to carry out their activities,
  - b. list events and activities of the clubs on the HCDP's website or newsletters,
  - c. provide an umbrella structure (HCDP's "Clubs and Organizations") whereby Democratic clubs may meet, share ideas and information, and coordinate activities), and
  - d. provide other information about the clubs and their activities to HCDP's membership or the general public.
2. To be permitted to participate in and have access to these benefits, a club must be approved by the Steering Committee, on recommendation of Clubs and Orgs Committee, and thereafter approved by the County Executive Committee. Approval requires:
  - a. creation of a PAC recognized by the Texas Ethics Commission,
  - b. election of club officers (including a treasurer of the Club's PAC),
  - c. adoption of bylaws and a mission statement,
  - d. recurring meetings no less frequently than quarterly,
  - e. at least 20 active dues-paying members,
  - f. satisfaction of HCDP support requirements (involving, for example, percentage of members who are individual sustaining members of the HCDP, JRR Dinner table sponsorship commitment, payment of Club sustaining membership dues, and/or providing volunteer services at party headquarters or activities), as uniform requirements adopted by the HCDP from time to time for all Clubs and Organizations may require,
  - g. and compliance with such other requirements as the HCDP may, from time to time, prescribe for such recognition and approval.
3. Approval may be withdrawn at any time by vote of the CEC (or the Steering Committee acting on behalf of the CEC pursuant to the Rules and Bylaws of the HCDP), for any reason deemed appropriate, pursuant to procedures providing reasonable due process. If approval is withdrawn, access to all benefits resulting from being recognized or approved as a Democratic Club will thereafter cease.
4. All HCDP recognized Clubs must adhere to all Rules and Bylaws of the Texas Democratic Party and the HCDP and promote membership in the Democratic Party and Democratic Party activism.
5. At all events, HCDP will have no responsibility or liability for any acts of any Democratic Club, even if HCDP has approved or recognized such club, including, without limitation, failure timely to file required financial disclosure reports, expenditure of club monies, actions of the officers or members of such clubs, or otherwise.
6. Recognition or approval by the HCDP gives a club no rights or privileges other than the permissions set forth above and no club may hold itself out to anyone as "affiliated" or "associated" with, or an auxiliary or component or other part of, the Harris County Democratic Party.

## **ARTICLE IX VACANCIES**

1. Each Congressional District shall elect a Vacancy Committee, which shall consist of at least six (6) members unless there are fewer than six (6) precincts in a Congressional District. The Congressional District Chairs shall name the Chair of the Vacancy Committee. The Vacancy Committee shall

nominate legally qualified persons to fill all vacancies that may occur on the CEC from the precincts in that congressional district.

2. Where the Vacancy Committee determines that the vacating CEC member was in good standing at the time of vacating the office, preference in the filling of vacancies shall be in the following order:
  - a. A letter of recommendation from the vacating CEC member; or
  - b. A letter of recommendation from the spouse of a deceased CEC member; or
  - c. Failing receipt of a written recommendation of the appropriate type provided in (1) or (2) above within a reasonable time, the Vacancy Committee shall recommend a legally qualified person of like political persuasion.
3. Where the Vacancy Committee determines that the vacating CEC member was not in good standing at the time of vacating the office, the Vacancy Committee shall recommend a legally qualified replacement without regard to any recommendation from the vacating CEC member.
4. In newly created precincts, the CEC member of the precinct from which the new precinct was created shall recommend a CEC member for that new precinct to the Vacancy Committee.
5. In vacancies caused by boundary changes affecting more than one precinct, the wishes of all affected CEC members shall be considered by the Vacancy Committee in the same manner as described above.
6. All nominations made by the Vacancy Committee are subject to approval of a majority of the CEC.
7. a. In accordance with Texas Election Code § 171.029(a), either (i) moving from the election precinct from which a precinct chair was elected to a residence outside the territorial boundaries of that precinct from which a precinct chair will be regarded as elected constitutes or (ii) failing to attend four consecutive meetings of the county executive committee will be deemed to be a resignation from office of the precinct chair and an abandonment of office. In such circumstances, the county chair may direct that the precinct chair's name be deleted from the list of Harris County Democratic precinct chairs on the official website of the Texas Secretary of State. The county chair shall, however, promptly notify the former precinct chair that he or she is no longer eligible to serve as a member of the HCDP County Executive Committee and cannot perform any statutory duties of a precinct chair and that his or her name has been removed from the list of precinct chairs on the SOS website.
  - b. The former precinct chair may contest the facts upon which the county chair's action was based by sending a letter to the county chair within ten business days disputing that they have moved from the precinct or failed to attend four consecutive CEC meetings. Failure to do so will be conclusively regarded as acknowledgment by the former precinct chair that he or she is no longer eligible to serve as precinct chair and has resigned from office. Should the former precinct chair timely dispute the county chair's actions, however, the matter shall be dealt with in the manner prescribed by Texas Election Code §§ 171.029(b) & (d), TDP Rules article VIII(F), HCDP Rules article VII(8)(a), and the requirements of due process.
- a. Either (i) moving from the election precinct from which a precinct chair was elected to a residence outside the territorial boundaries of that precinct, or (ii) failing to attend four consecutive meetings of the county executive committee will be deemed to be a resignation from office by the precinct chair.

Upon receipt of information the county chair deems credible indicating such circumstances exist, the county chair may direct that the precinct chair's name be deleted from the list of Harris County Democratic precinct chairs on the official website of the Texas Secretary of State. The county chair shall, however, promptly notify the former precinct chair (iii) that it has been determined that he or she has resigned from office by operation of these Rules and is, therefore, no longer eligible to serve as a member of the HCDP County Executive Committee, (iv) of the reason(s) why such a conclusion has been reached, (v) that his or her name has been removed from the list of precinct chairs on the SOS website, and (vi) that the former precinct chair may submit a response to this action within ten business days.

b. The former precinct chair may contest the facts upon which the county chair's action was based by sending a letter to the county chair within ten business days in which the former precinct chair disputes that they have moved from the precinct or failed to attend four consecutive CEC meetings (or provides a suitable explanation for having failed to attend four consecutive CEC meeting, such as being on active military service duty during that time, or having been prevented from attending because of disability or illness) and affirmatively states that he or she wishes to continue in office. Failure to provide such a response within that ten-day period of time will be conclusively regarded as acknowledgment by the former precinct chair that he or she is no longer eligible to serve as precinct chair and has resigned from office. Should the former precinct chair timely dispute the county chair's actions, however, and affirmatively state that he or she wishes to continue in office, the matter will be dealt with in the manner prescribed by Texas Election Code § 171.029(a), (b) & (d), TDP Rules Article VIII(F), HCDP Rules Article VII(8)(a), and the requirements of due process. In such circumstances, this Rule shall constitute the CEC authorization required by the Texas Election Code § 171.029(b).

## **ARTICLE X PRECINCT CAPTAIN**

1. A Precinct Captain is:

- a. An individual appointed by the Precinct Chair or Congressional District Chair to assist in the duties of a Precinct Chair.
- b. An individual appointed by the Congressional District Chair to organize a vacant precinct.

2. A Precinct Chair may appoint a Precinct Captain(s) in the appointing Precinct chair's precinct to assist with any activity related to voter education, registration, voter identification or get-out-the-vote (GOTV) effort in the precinct.

3. A Congressional District Chair may appoint a Precinct Captain(s) if the precinct is vacant or inactive.

4. A Precinct Chair or Congressional District Chair may in their discretion remove an appointed Precinct Captain at any time for any or no reason but a Precinct Chair may only remove a Precinct Captain in his or her own precinct.

5. A Precinct Captain shall have no standing or voting authority, which is a statutory duty of a Precinct Chair.

6. A Precinct Captain need not reside in the precinct to which he or she is appointed, but all Precinct Captains must sign an Oath of Affiliation to the Democratic Party in the form prescribed by TDP Rules, Article VII(4).

7. The term of a Precinct Captain ends on the twentieth day following the Runoff Primary in the even numbered year after the Precinct Captain was appointed.

## **ARTICLE XI – SECRETARY**

1. The CEC shall elect a Secretary of the CEC at the first of the newly elected and installed CEC, who shall serve for the full two-year term of that CEC, or thereafter until a successor shall be elected. The duties of the Secretary shall be to keep the minutes of the meetings of the CEC, and such other duties as may be placed upon the Secretary herein, or by the TDP Rules, or by State Law, or that may from time to time be assigned to the Secretary by the Chair, or by the CEC.

2. In the event the office of county chair becomes vacant as a result of the death, disqualification, or resignation of the county chair, or the county chair becomes unable to perform the duties of that office as a result of incapacitation, the HCDP Secretary shall perform all of the duties and responsibilities of the county chair (except to the extent otherwise provided by State Law or by the TDP Rules) until a new chair is elected by the CEC or a previously incapacitated county chair is able to resume the duties of the office of County Chair.

## **ARTICLE XII - TREASURER**

1. The CEC shall elect from its membership a Treasurer at the first meeting of the newly elected and installed CEC who shall serve the full two-year term of that CEC, or thereafter until a successor shall be elected.

2. The Treasurer shall keep or cause to be kept an accurate record of all funds received and spent by the CEC and shall present or have presented a financial report at all meetings of the CEC.

## **ARTICLE XIII - NOTICES**

Whenever these rules or the TDP Rules require that timely notice be given (including notice in writing), such notice shall be regarded as having been given (including “in writing”) if it is published prominently on the Party’s website and either contained in an e-mail or in a written notice. However, if a member of the CEC or the Steering Committee notifies the county chair in writing that he or she does not have ready access to e-mail or the internet, e-mail and website posting of notice will not be sufficient as to that person, and other appropriate means of providing written notice to that person shall be employed (ordinarily, United States mail).

## **ARTICLE XIV– AMENDMENT**

These Rules may be amended by a majority of the CEC members attending a meeting called for such purpose, provided the proposed amendment must be mailed or emailed to the CEC members at least ten (10) days before its adoption is considered by the CEC.

## **ARTICLE XV - SAVINGS CLAUSE**

To the extent these rules conflict with applicable law or the Texas Democratic Party Rules, they shall be deemed amended to make them compliant while at the same time preserving as much as possible the original intent of the language which is in conflict.