

2015-2016 Proposed Endorsement Procedures for KCDCC

Endorsements are a public declaration of support by the King County Democrats on behalf of a candidate for public office or for a person seeking appointment to a public position of responsibility. Endorsements also signify support or opposition to ballot measures. Endorsements represent a determination by the King County Democrats that the success of a particular campaign will further our Democratic values and ideals.

Rule I – Timeframe and general criteria for endorsements

- **Section 1.** Every candidate endorsement shall be for a specific candidate, office and term. A candidate may not be endorsed for more than one office simultaneously.
- **Section 2.** Endorsements may be considered for any candidate or ballot measure for which at least one registered voter in King County is eligible to vote for.
- **Section 3.** Any process sanctioned by Washington State Democratic Party for nominating candidates supersedes these endorsement procedures if they conflict with that process.
- **Section 4.** Endorsements made before the end of any filing period, whether the regular filing week in May or a special filing period, shall be considered early endorsements unless the endorsement is for a Democratic Party nomination or an appointment, and not an elected office.
- **Section 5.** Endorsements for a nomination, or endorsements made after the end of filing (but before the Top Two election) shall be considered regular endorsements.
- **Section 6.** Endorsements made after the Top Two election shall be considered late endorsements.

Rule II – Endorsements Committee

- **Section 1.** The Endorsements Committee is responsible for reviewing the qualifications of candidates and making a recommendation to the membership on which candidates to support (for nominations, elected office, or appointed positions) and which ballot measures to support or oppose.
- **Section 2.** The Endorsements Committee shall consist of the following voting members, appointed by the KCDCC Chair, who shall also serve on the committee as an ex-officio member with full voting rights:
 - A committee chair and three vice chairs (one of whom shall act as Chair in the Chair's absence);
 - A representative from each legislative district wholly or partially within King County (selected in consultation with the chair of that Democratic legislative district organization);
 - A representative from the King County Young Democrats (KCYD);
 - One representative each from the Voter Outreach, Legislative Action, and Platform Committees.
- **Section 3.** Legislative district organizations may send one nonvoting observer to committee meetings in addition to their representative. Observers have voice at these meetings at the Chair's discretion.
- **Section 4.** The Chair of the Washington State Democratic Party or the Chair's designee is welcome to attend any meeting of the KCDCC Endorsements Committee as a nonvoting observer.
- **Section 5.** A quorum must be present before the Endorsements Committee may conduct any business. A quorum is one third of the voting members appointed to the committee. In the absence of a quorum, no action shall be taken except to adjourn the meeting.
- **Section 6.** No candidate, employee of a consulting firm that provides services and counsel to candidates, or staff member to a candidate shall be eligible to serve as a voting member of the Endorsements Committee or observe its post-interview deliberations.

Rule III – Significance of endorsements

- **Section 1.** KCDCC's Leadership Council shall determine what services endorsed candidates are eligible to receive. Campaigns must sign a data-sharing agreement with KCDCC prior to receiving KCDCC data.
- **Section 2.** Candidates and ballot measure coalitions may not receive any financial support from KCDCC unless they have received an endorsement. Furthermore, KCDCC shall only promote the circulation of petitions for ballot measures it has endorsed.
- **Section 3.** In the absence of an endorsement, officers are expected to make case-by-case decisions on providing specific non-financial services in furtherance of KCDCC's goals of electing Democratic candidates and advancing Democratic values and ideals.

Rule IV – Candidates eligible for endorsement

- **Section 1.** To be eligible for endorsement, a candidate must file as a Democrat or publicly announce his or her intention to do so, unless the candidate is seeking a nonpartisan office.
- **Section 2.** A candidate must request the KCDCC's support to be considered for an endorsement. Completion of the appropriate KCDCC candidate questionnaire constitutes a request.
- **Section 3.** If the nonpartisan office sought is judicial, no attempt shall be made to ascertain party affiliation. If the nonpartisan office sought is executive or legislative, a candidate must satisfactorily answer the question, "Are you a Democrat?" in the affirmative.

Rule V – Evaluation of candidate endorsement requests

- **Section 1.** All endorsement requests made of KCDCC must first go to the Endorsements Committee for review and possible recommendation. Completion of a questionnaire constitutes a request.
- **Section 2.** If the Endorsements Committee is evaluating a race in which there are multiple Democratic candidates, and finds that one or more has not completed the KCDCC questionnaire, it may, at its discretion, choose to defer finalizing a recommendation for that race in order to give fair consideration to each candidate who may be eligible for an endorsement.
- **Section 3.** To be recommended for endorsement to the executive board or the full central committee, a candidate or ballot measure position must receive a two-thirds vote of Endorsements Committee members present and voting following deliberations.
- **Section 4.** The Endorsements Committee may only recommend one candidate per office at a time. If KCDCC defeats a recommendation but does not endorse a competing candidate prior to adjourning, the Committee may recommend a different candidate for the same office at the next meeting.

Rule VI – Endorsements for and against ballot measures

- **Section 1.** No request from a campaign or coalition is necessary for KCDCC to take a position on a ballot measure. Positions may be taken on any ballot measure (such as an initiative, proposition, constitutional amendment, or referendum) for which the language is finalized and a number assigned.
- **Section 2.** Positions may be taken either through a simply-worded motion specifying a ballot measure, position, and election date, or through a resolution explaining the party's position in greater detail.
- **Section 3.** A resolution concerning a ballot measure submitted to KCDCC shall first go to the Platform, Resolutions, & Bylaws Committee (hereafter Platform Committee). Upon completing work on such a resolution, the Platform Committee shall submit it to the Endorsements Committee for further action. If two-thirds of the Committee are in favor of the resolution, it shall be presented to KCDCC with a "do pass" recommendation. If two-thirds are opposed to the resolution, it shall be presented to KCDCC with a "no pass" recommendation. If two-thirds of the committee cannot agree on a position, it shall be presented without recommendation, or referred back to the Platform Committee with instruction.
- **Section 4.** If the Endorsements Committee wishes to take a position on a ballot measure through resolution, but no resolution on that measure has been submitted to the Platform Committee by a legislative district organization, the Chair of the Endorsements Committee shall assign one or more Committee members to draft an appropriate resolution on the Committee's behalf. The completed draft shall then be submitted to the Platform Committee for its review. Upon completing work on the resolution, the Platform Committee shall return it to the full Endorsements Committee for consideration in accordance with Section 3 of this article. A majority vote of the Platform Committee shall always be sufficient to advance a ballot measure resolution to the Endorsements Committee for its consideration.
- **Section 5.** At meetings of the executive board or central committee, the Committees shall jointly present any resolutions on ballot measures prior to consideration of other resolutions.
- **Section 6.** With the exception of citizen-generated referenda that are in the signature gathering stage, resolutions concerning ballot measures must contain a *Therefore be it resolved* clause that commits the organization to supporting or opposing the measure on the ballot in the event it qualifies, if it has not already qualified for the ballot by the date of the meeting. A resolution concerning a citizen-generated referendum that is not yet on the ballot shall urge a *Please sign* or *Decline to sign* position.

Rule VII – Committee meetings, questionnaires, and interviews

- **Section 1.** Each winter, the Endorsements Committee shall prepare questionnaires for offices to be contested at the next Top Two and general elections. The members of the committee must approve the questionnaires by majority vote. Approved questionnaires shall be submitted to KCDCC by the Committee for ratification no later than a week in advance of KCDCC's March meeting.
- **Section 2.** Questionnaires for candidates seeking appointment to an office that it is being filled by special election shall be developed, approved, and submitted for ratification as needed.
- **Section 3.** Legislative district organizations may submit addenda to questionnaires for inclusion alongside the blank questionnaires KCDCC distributes to candidates through its website or email.
- **Section 4.** The Endorsements Chair shall consult with the members of the Committee or poll them to find appropriate times and venues for the committee to periodically meet to conduct its business.
- **Section 5.** The Endorsements Committee's Chair and Vice Chairs shall be responsible for reaching out to candidates interested in applying for KCDCC's endorsement and scheduling interviews with them.
- **Section 6.** At the Endorsements Committee's discretion, interviews may be held jointly with legislative district organizations for candidates who are running for office within their jurisdictions.

Rule VIII – Consideration of endorsement requests; endorsement motions

- **Section 1.** Endorsement requests shall be considered at every regular meeting of the executive board or central committee between the close of filing and the general election. At other times of the year, notice must be provided seven days in advance that endorsement business will be on the agenda.
- **Section 2.** At each meeting where endorsements are being considered by KCDCC, the Chair and Endorsements Chair shall propose, as part of the meeting agenda, a calendar to determine the order of consideration for the committee's recommendations and motions from the floor.
- **Section 3.** The proposed and adopted calendars must ensure that competing motions from the floor to endorse candidates for the same office are considered sequentially, on a per-office basis.
- **Section 4.** The Endorsements Committee must present its recommendations, if it is making any, before any endorsement motions from the floor can be considered. Motions to endorse that are offered prior to this presentation shall be out of order. Each presentation of the committee shall constitute a separate motion and not require a second to be placed on the floor.
- **Section 5.** All endorsement motions require a two-thirds vote of members present and voting to pass.
- **Section 6.** Slates of candidates and ballot measure positions may be considered in a single motion, but a slate may list only one candidate per office.
- **Section 7.** Candidates shall only be considered for endorsement once per election, or once prior to the date of a nominating convention. New motions to endorse a candidate whose endorsement has already been voted down at a current or prior meeting shall be out of order, unless the candidate has again become eligible for endorsement due to having survived a Top Two election.
- **Section 8.** The KCDCC Chair shall provide the body with opportunities to ask questions about a recommendation prior to taking speakers for and against the motion to adopt the recommendation.
- **Section 9.** Debate on each endorsement motion shall be limited to two statements for and against, lasting no longer than two minutes each. The Chair shall appoint a timekeeper to enforce this rule.
- **Section 10.** When a vote on an endorsement motion is held, the secretary shall record the number of ayes and the number of nays on the motion immediately after the Chair has stated a tally for each.
- **Section 11.** Where a legislative district organization has endorsed a candidate for a position in a jurisdiction wholly contained within its boundaries, KCDCC shall not make a conflicting endorsement.

Rule IX – Endorsements for nominations, nominations, and late endorsements

- **Section 1.** Candidates who are seeking an elective office that the Washington State Democratic Party will be nominating a candidate may only request to be endorsed for the nomination prior to the date of the nominating convention for that office.
- **Section 2.** Candidates who are seeking to be elected to the offices of state senator or state representative from districts wholly or partially within King County shall not be eligible for an endorsement until they have been endorsed by their respective legislative district or by the WSDCC.

- **Section 3.** Individuals nominated for state senator or state representative by the WSDCC or by a legislative district that overlaps with King County shall automatically be considered endorsed.
- **Section 4.** Candidates who are nominated by the Washington State Democratic Party for the following statewide and federal positions shall automatically be considered endorsed:
 - The federal offices of U.S. Senate and U.S. Representative
 - The statewide executive department offices of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, Commissioner of Public Lands, and Insurance Commissioner
- **Section 5.** The candidates nominated for the offices of President and Vice President of the United States of America by the Democratic Party at the Democratic National Convention shall automatically be considered endorsed. Motions to endorse candidates for either office are never in order.
- **Section 6.** In the event a candidate who is endorsed by KCDCC for a nomination does not become the nominee, the endorsement that he or she received shall immediately lapse.
- **Section 7.** An endorsement for a nomination remains valid until the nomination is filled or the candidate is eliminated from contention due to failing to place first or second in a Top Two election.
- **Section 8.** In the event that a candidate nominated by the Washington State Democratic Party for federal or statewide office does not survive the Top Two election, and the WSDCC does not choose a new nominee at its autumn meeting, the remaining Democrats in the race – if any – shall become eligible for a late endorsement, if they have satisfied the requirements set forth in Rule IV.
- **Section 9.** A Democratic candidate seeking the office of King County Prosecutor may request to be endorsed for the nomination beginning eight months in advance of the date of the Top Two or special election at which the position will be on the ballot.
- **Section 10.** KCDCC shall hold a nominating convention to nominate a candidate for the position of Prosecutor in advance of every election at which this position is to be filled. Following the close of filing, the KCDCC Chair shall review the names of candidates who have filed to run for King County Prosecutor. If there are two or fewer candidates, with at least one being a Democrat, or if there will not be a Top Two election, the KCDCC Chair shall schedule a nominating convention for the following month. If there be more than two candidates, with at least one being a Democrat, the Chair shall schedule the nominating convention to be held following the certification of the Top Two election.

Rule X – Rescission of endorsements

- **Section 1.** An endorsement may be rescinded by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting at a KCDCC meeting. Any voting member of KCDCC may request that KCDCC consider rescinding an endorsement at an upcoming meeting, but this request must include a rationale and must be made of the Chair at least ten days in advance of a meeting so timely notice can be provided to KCDCC.
- **Section 2.** If the KCDCC Chair approves a request to consider rescinding an endorsement of a candidate at an upcoming meeting, that candidate must be copied on the final call to the meeting.
- **Section 3.** In the event that an endorsed candidate withdraws, the endorsement he or she received from KCDCC shall immediately and automatically lapse.

Rule XI – Endorsements for leadership positions in the Democratic Party

- **Section 1.** An individual seeking a Washington State Democratic Party leadership position may request an endorsement in advance of the meeting when the position will be filled. Endorsement requests for party offices that are to be filled at biennial reorganization meetings cannot be considered until the date of the general election in November has passed.
- **Section 2.** KCDCC shall not endorse candidates for leadership positions on its own executive board or the boards of any legislative district organization.

Rule XII – Amendment of these Endorsement Procedures

- **Section 1.** Once adopted, these procedures may be amended by majority vote of the KCDCC at any properly called meeting; however, notice that changes to the endorsements procedures will be considered must be provided at least seven days in advance.