

# **Report of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC) Task Force on Caucuses and the Composition of Steering**

## **Summary of Recommended Changes**

The following bylaws changes are recommended by the Task Force. In summary, these changes:

- Define a caucus as a group representing a core or unrepresented constituency, not organized around a specific issue or cause where each member of the caucus is entitled to their own vote;
- Affirm that both voting and associate members of FCDC can be members of caucuses;
- Require that caucuses and standing committees must have at least six meetings/events and members from at least four different districts over 12 months to be considered active;
- Add caucus chairs to the Steering Committee, and further require that standing committees and caucuses be active to have a representative on Steering;
- Create a process for caucus and standing committee formation that requires a single Steering vote and a single General meeting vote, rather than at two subsequent General meetings and defining other requirements prior to creation;
- Redefine the following existing standing committees as caucuses: 50+, Black Caucus, Labor, LGBTQQA+, Veterans and Military Families, and Women's Affairs; and
- Make various editorial changes to apply similar treatment to caucuses as standing committees.

Over the course of the five meetings of the Task Force, considerable discussion was made on the recommended bylaws revisions proposed in this document. The main purpose of the changes is to create a framework for the creation and operation of caucuses within FCDC.

Article VII of the FCDC Bylaws was substantially reorganized to separate clauses specific to standing committees and caucuses, and to subsequently provide common details about reorganization, creation, and requirements to be considered active.

While there was discussion about potentially making more substantial changes to the composition of the Steering Committee, the resulting majority decision was to make the limited changes of adding the chairs of caucuses and requiring both standing committees and caucuses be active to retain their vote on Steering. A minority of the task force feels that the Steering Committee is too large, but the size of Steering has not created substantial operational problems and there is a concern that removing representation from Steering may make the overall proposal unacceptable as it would contradict our democratic principle of inclusion.

Our recommendation also reclassifies the 50+, Black Caucus, Labor, LGBTQQA+, Veterans and Military Families, and Women's Rights standing committees to become caucuses. The omission of Youth Affairs was intentional, leaving the Fairfax Young Democrats as the primary member organization and leaving Youth Affairs to highlight youth issues and support the increased participation of younger people in Committee activities.

Not all parts of this proposal were unanimously agreed to, but we believe collectively they provide a workable basis for the operation and establishment of caucuses.

Signed,

Bryan Graham, Chair  
George Becerra  
Tyler Begley  
Terry Matlaga Bell  
Rose Chu  
Donald Craig

Paul Davis  
Kelly Hebron  
Debbie Kilpatrick  
Sandra J. Klassen  
Larry Mills  
Nelly Samaniego

Manisha Singh  
Denver Supinger  
Michelle Woody  
Aaron Yohai  
Janice Yohai  
Maritza Zermeño

## **Background**

At the July 2020 FCDC General Meeting, a recommendation to create caucuses was referred by the County Committee to a task force to be created by the County Chair. As a result, the County Chair formed a “Task Force on Caucuses and the Composition of Steering” with the limited purpose of:

- Reviewing the proposed bylaws changes referred to the task force; and
- Recommending changes to the FCDC Bylaws related to the addition of Caucuses and the Composition of Steering, including:
  - The definition of an FCDC Caucus, if it differs from Standing Committees
  - The process by which a Caucus is created and disbanded
  - The composition of who is a member of an FCDC Caucus
  - Whether some existing FCDC Standing Committees should be reclassified as Caucuses
  - How the Composition of the FCDC Steering Committee should change as a result of the creation of Caucuses
  - How these changes affect the Diversity and Outreach Standing Committees

## Proposed Bylaws Changes

*Revise Article VI, Sections 1 and 2 as follows:*

### **ARTICLE VI – STEERING COMMITTEE**

Section 1. There shall be a Steering Committee of the County Committee to coordinate the work of the County Committee, District committees, and the Standing Committees, and caucuses.

Section 2. The Steering Committee shall consist of: the elected officers of the County Committee, the chairs of the district committees, the chairs of the active standing committees and caucuses, a representative selected by the Advisory Committee, the highest ranking officer of the Congressional District Democratic Committees with boundaries inside Fairfax County who are Voting Members of the County Committee, a representative selected by the Fairfax County Young Democrats who is a resident of Fairfax County and is a Voting Member of the County Committee; the immediate past County Chair, and any member of the State Central Committee's Steering Committee who resides in Fairfax County and is a Voting Member of the County Committee. If an officer of the County Committee who chairs a Standing committee or a District chair is unable to attend a meeting of the Steering Committee, they may designate another officer of their committee to represent that committee with full privileges; if a chair of a District committee, Standing committee, or caucus is unable to attend a meeting of the Steering Committee, they may designate another officer or Voting Member of their committee or caucus to represent that committee with full privileges. The County Chair shall be the Chair of the Steering Committee.

**Commented [A1]:** This language clarifies that an officer or voting member other than the chair can be designated to represent a committee or caucus at Steering if the chair is unable to attend.

*Revise Article VII as follows:*

### **ARTICLE VII – OTHER COMMITTEES, CAUCUSES, AND APPOINTMENTS**

Section 1. Standing Committees

- a) There shall be the following standing committees as of the date of adoption: 50+, Central Communications, Diversity, Education, Election Law and Voter Protection, Environmental, Finance, Headquarters, Labor, LGBTQQA, National Affairs, Newsletter, Personnel, Precinct Operations, State and Local Affairs, Technology, Veterans and Military Families, Voter Registration and Education, Women's Rights, Youth Affairs.
- b) Section 2. On each Standing committee other than Election Law and Voter Protection, Personnel, and Precinct Operations, each District committee may have more than one member, but shall be entitled to one vote. The vote for each District may be established as a priority among members or as fractional, the determination to be made in order by (a) the relevant District committee, (b) the members on the Standing committee from the district, or (c) the other members of the Standing committee.
- c) Section 3. The Precinct Operations Committees shall have one member for every thirty County Committee Voting Members or major fraction thereof apportioned to each district committee; but no District shall have fewer than two members.
- d) Section 4. The Election Law and Voter Protection Committee shall have one member, who shall be an attorney, appointed by each of the District Chairs, and one member appointed by each of the Regional Vice Chairs. The Chair of the Election Law and Protection Committee shall be appointed by the County Chair and shall be an attorney.

e) Section 5. The Personnel Committee shall be appointed by the County Chair, and the County Chair, the Treasurer, at least one Regional Vice Chair, and at least one District Committee Chair shall be members.

f) The Diversity and Outreach Committees shall consist of members representing caucuses in addition to those representing District committees.

g) Section 6. A Standing committee shall meet at the call of the chair or upon the request of any five of its members.

h) Section 7. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be members of the Finance Committee.

i) Section 8. The Webmaster and VAN Administrator shall be members of the Technology Committee.

i) The County Chair shall be an ex officio, nonvoting member of all Standing committees; but the attendance of the County Chair shall not be considered for purposes of a quorum.

k) To be eligible for creation, the standing committee shall have written Authority and Responsibilities describing its proposed purpose and activities.

ii-

## Section 2. Caucuses

a) There shall be the following caucuses: 50+, Black, Labor, LGBTQA+, Veterans and Military Families, and Women

b) Members of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee may form new caucuses to represent a historically underrepresented constituency that shares inherent and/or immutable traits, not organized around a specific only concern about an issue or cause.

c) All members of a caucus are entitled their own individual vote in the business of the caucus.

d) A caucus shall meet at the call of its chair or upon the request of the greater of five members or 10% of its members.

e) To be eligible for creation, the caucus shall:

- represent a minimum of three percent of FCDC membership or of County residents; and
- have a written Authority and Responsibilities describing its proposed purpose and activities, and a statement of membership qualifications that include an affirmative act by the Democrat to join the caucus.

Section 93. A convener of the reorganization meeting of each Standing committee and caucus shall be designated by the County Chair. The members of each Standing committee and caucus shall elect a chair from themselves, except as provided elsewhere in these Bylaws.

Section 104. Standing committee and caucus chairs who are not elected officers of the County Committee may be removed from office by the following procedure. A member of the Steering Committee may offer a motion to the Steering Committee to remove the standing committee or caucus chair for cause. At least ten days' notice shall be given to the Standing committee or caucus chair prior to the Steering Committee consideration and

**Formatted:** Space After: 0 pt, Border: Top: (No border), Bottom: (No border), Left: (No border), Right: (No border), Between : (No border)

such Standing committee or caucus chair will have an opportunity to be heard prior to any action by the Steering Committee. Any action by the Steering Committee removing a Standing committee or caucus chair may be appealed to the Congressional District Committees pursuant to the State Party Plan.

Section 5. A standing committee or caucus meeting all requirements set forth in these Bylaws may be created by a resolution signed by at least FCDC members from at least five different districts approved by a majority vote of the Steering Committee followed by a majority vote at the next county committee meeting, or by a two-thirds vote at a single county committee meeting. Notice of a vote to approve a standing committee or caucus must be provided to county committee members at least seven days prior to the meeting at which the vote is to occur.

Section 6. Standing committees and caucuses must hold six meetings and/or events, either in-person or virtual, and have members from at least four of the county's magisterial districts over the preceding 12 months to be considered active. Records of activity and membership must be maintained and provided to the Corresponding Secretary at least every three months. The Corresponding Secretary will notify the county chair and the standing committee or caucus chair, if any, if a caucus or standing committee is not meeting this criteria over the last nine months, and again when a standing committee or caucus is longer considered active.

Section 11. The County Chair shall be an ex officio, nonvoting member of all Standing committees; but the attendance of the County Chair shall not be considered for purposes of a quorum.

Section 427. The County Committee may establish special committees. The purpose of a special committee and the method of election or appointment of its members and the method of selection of its chair shall be expressed in the resolution of the County Committee by which the special committee is established.

Section 438. The County Chair may establish task forces and appoint their members and chair for a limited purpose to be concluded within 90 days. If the work of a task force cannot be concluded within 90 days, the County Committee may establish a special committee for the purpose.

Section 449. The County Chair may convene a meeting of any standing or special committee or caucus.

Section 4510. The Democratic elected officials shall constitute an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee shall elect a chair and Steering Committee from among themselves.

Section 4611. The County Chair shall appoint a Parliamentarian and a Counsel, who shall advise the County Chair and the Steering Committee but shall not serve as members of the Steering Committee in these roles.

Section 4712. The County Chair may appoint a Webmaster, VAN Administrator, and a Communications Adviser, to assist with these stated jobs and advise the Chair, Steering Committee, and District committees, but shall not serve as members of the Steering Committee in these roles.

*Revise the following sections of the FCDC Bylaws where Standing committees are referenced and should now include caucuses:*

### **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1.

- a. There shall be two categories of members of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee: Voting and Associate.
  - i. ALL Members shall have the right to address the membership of the County Committee and their District Committee, serve as a voting representative of their District Committee on a standing committee, as a voting member of a caucus, and all other privileges and duties of membership of the County Committee.
  - ii. ONLY Voting Members shall additionally have the right to introduce motions, vote on motions of the County Committee and District Committee, serve as officers of the County Committee or District Committee, and chair a standing committee or caucus.

#### **ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS**

Section 8. During the period following the last regular meeting in each biennium, all outgoing officers of the County Committee and District Committees, and officers and members of standing committees and caucuses shall continue to serve until they have been replaced in the manner provided in the Bylaws.

Section 9. The County Chair shall be the chief executive officer of the County Committee. The County Chair shall have the authority to suspend any elected officer ~~or~~, Standing Committee Chair, or caucus chair for neglect of duty for a period not to exceed 65 days.

Section 11. The Steering Committee shall prepare a document describing the authority and responsibilities of the elected officers and, Standing committees, and caucuses. This document, with such changes as the Steering Committee deems necessary, shall be presented to each subsequent reorganization meeting of the County Committee for consideration as an administrative resolution which may be adopted prior to the election of officers, except the County Chair. The proposed authority and responsibilities of new caucuses and standing committees are added to the adopted document upon their creation.

#### **ARTICLE VIII – MEETINGS**

Section 6. Each District committee and, Standing committee, and caucus shall have a regularly scheduled meeting date. Notice of all District committee, and Standing committee, and caucus meetings shall be sent to all members of the pertinent committee.

Section 7. In compliance with the State Party Plan, the presence of 30% of the Voting Members of the County Committee shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business at County Committee meetings; the presence of 30% of the Voting Members of a District Committee shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business at District Committee meetings; and the presence of 30% of members of a standing committee, caucus, task force, or special committee shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business of such meetings.