

Hamilton County Democratic Party
Nomination Recommendation Committees Ground Rules
Adopted as of July 20, 2019

Hamilton County Democratic Party Nominating Committees

- ❖ **Cincinnati Democratic Committee (CDC)** is responsible for the nomination process for all elections within the City of Cincinnati including mayor, city council, school board, charter amendments, and levies within the City of Cincinnati
- ❖ **County Nominating Committee** is responsible for all non-judicial countywide offices including, auditor, clerk of courts, commissioners, prosecutor, treasurer
- ❖ **Legislative Nominating Committee** is responsible for all United States Congressional offices and Statewide offices
- ❖ **Small Government Nominating Committee** is responsible for all Hamilton County villages and city governments outside of the City of Cincinnati. The small government committee shall work in tandem with any existing small government committees and shall not recommend endorsement until after the small government committee has endorsed
- ❖ **Judicial Nominating Committee** is responsible for all judicial offices including municipal, common pleas general division, common pleas specialty courts (i.e. drug court), domestic relations, juvenile, and probate court offices

How are the Nominating Committee Co-Chairs Chosen?

- ❖ For CDC Committees, they are chosen from the CDC Leadership Team (the Officers), and chosen by the CDC Leadership Team (the Officers)
- ❖ For HCDP Committees, they are chosen from the HCDP Executive Committee, and chosen by the HCDP Leadership Team (the Officers)

How Are Committee Members chosen?

- ❖ All Precinct Executives should be notified when a Committee is formed and given the opportunity to apply
- ❖ You must be a registered Democrat with the Board of Elections to serve on a Nominating Committee, with preference given to Precinct Executives, and members of Executive Committee
 - Voter registration records will be examined prior to appointment on a committee
- ❖ Every effort will be made to have the process of choosing Committee members transparent to the organization as a whole
- ❖ The Committee Co-Chairs will endeavor to make the committee representative of the demographics of the Party & City/County

- Representation includes taking into consideration Minorities, Women, LGBTQ Community, Labor, and Geography
 - NOTE: Judicial Committee must include at least some non-lawyers, preferably with Court experience
- ❖ The Committee Co-Chairs will recruit people based on representation needs
- ❖ The Co-Chairs will consider an individual's activity level in the party, including attendance at regular CDC and HCDP meetings
- ❖ Elected officials and/or anyone running for office are unable to serve on the Nominating Committee for which their office falls under (i.e. State representative cannot serve on legislative nominating committee)
 - This restriction does not include an office holders or candidates ability to serve on standing committees that are not nominating committees involving their office (i.e. Judicial Committee)
- ❖ Hamilton County Democratic Party Chair or Co-Chairs have final approval of any formed Nominating Committee

Size of Nominating Committees

- ❖ 9 to 15, excluding Committee Co-Chairs for CDC Nominating Committees
- ❖ 9 to 20 excluding Committee Co-Chairs for Judicial Nominating Committees
- ❖ 9 to 15 excluding Committee Co-Chairs for all other HCDP Nominating Committees

Conflict of Interest rule

- ❖ Campaign managers, candidates, candidate staff, and any individual who has publicly declared a preference for a candidate for office cannot be on the Nominating Committee that falls under the office the candidate is seeking. **Publicly declared preference** is defined as a person who has demonstrated vocal support for a specific candidate seeking endorsement for a current race, and their demonstrated support would give the appearance of impropriety and possibly affect the purpose of the committee to be fair and impartial to all candidates seeking endorsement
 - **Note: this restriction is limited to each current election cycle**

Responsibilities of Committee Members:

- ❖ Committee members must attend 100% of the interviews in order to vote, unless excused by a Committee Chair. A maximum of one meeting can be excused. Call-ins will be allowed. The Committee Chairs are responsible to ensure that a committee member who is excused is brought up to date

- ❖ Any member of a Nominating Committee must have supported the party financially in the past calendar year at an amount of at least \$1 per month or \$12 per year. The financial contribution includes any contribution made to the Hamilton County Democratic Party, Hamilton County Judicial Fund, or any Democratic neighborhood club (i.e. North Central Dems, Silverton Dems, etc.)
- ❖ Committee members shall not discuss committee deliberations outside the Committee meetings
 - **Note: Any committee member who publicly discusses nominating committee deliberations or any privileged communication within the committee will not be permitted to serve on any future nominating committee. If the nominating committee is still in session, that person shall be immediately removed from the committee**

Operating Rules

- ❖ The Nominating Committees shall follow the rules herein, the bylaws of Hamilton County Democratic Party and Ohio Democratic Party. If a rule is not contained in any of those documents, the Committees will operate according to Robert's Rules
- ❖ The HCDP Executive Director is responsible for distributing via the HCDP website, social media, and a notice in the HCDP newsletter questionnaires, contact information for questions regarding the questionnaires, and all deadlines relative to questionnaire submission and endorsement interview timelines
- ❖ Questionnaires shall be provided to any interested candidate at least four (4) weeks prior to the first set of interviews
- ❖ Questionnaires are due to the Nominating Committee chairs two (2) weeks prior to the first set of interviews and shall be distributed to the Nominating Committee no later than one week prior to the first set of interviews
 - **Note: Incumbents must fill out the questionnaire required of all candidates. At the discretion of the Co-Chairs, candidates may submit their last questionnaire and update only those portions that have changed since their last endorsement**
- ❖ **Questionnaires¹**
 - All Candidates must sign their completed questionnaires
 - Questionnaires sent to the candidates will have 3 sections:
 - Vetting Questions
 - Democratic Values/Platform Questions
 - Office specific questions – some generic, some updated each election year at the discretion of the Nominating Committee based on current issues
- ❖ Every candidate who timely submits a questionnaire shall receive an endorsement interview

¹ The CDC and HCDP standard vetting questions will be provided to co-chairs each campaign cycle

- ❖ **ANYONE WHO DOES NOT SUBMIT A QUESTIONNAIRE WILL NOT RECEIVE AN INTERVIEW AND WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR ENDORSEMENT CONSIDERATION**
- ❖ All incumbents shall be given the opportunity to interview first for re-election to their current office. If the incumbent's schedule conflicts with the Nominating Committee's interview schedule such that the incumbent cannot be interviewed first, the Co-Chairs are under no obligation to modify the interview schedule
- ❖ Incumbents will be interviewed and treated the same as non-incumbents, taking into account electability
- ❖ The Nominating Committee will decide on questions for the interview process that will be consistently asked of all candidates
- ❖ Nominating Committees shall endeavor to be consistent in questioning of candidates keeping in mind that a candidate's questionnaire or comments during the interview may cause the committee to deviate from standard questions
 - **Note: ANYONE WHO DOES NOT SIT FOR AN ENDORSEMENT INTERVIEW WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR ENDORSEMENT CONSIDERATION**
- ❖ Nominating Committees will make recommendation to endorse. If after interviews there is no candidate who meets the criteria to be a Democratic Party candidate, then the committee will make an endorsement recommendation of NO RECOMMENDATION
- ❖ If there will be a primary for a particular race, 2/3 majority of the Committee is required for Endorsement
- ❖ If there will be a primary for a particular race and no candidate receives 2/3 majority of the Committee vote then the recommendation shall be NO RECOMMENDATION
- ❖ A Secretary will be elected by the Committee to record all decisions

Nominating Committee endorsement restrictions

- ❖ In a field type race, the Nominating Committee is limited to recommending only up to the number of openings in that race
- ❖ IF there are a large number of candidates for a finite number of spots, the Nominating Committee **may** be take a straw poll before discussions to see if the number can be consolidated to a few
- ❖ The candidates with the top votes up to the limit of openings will be the recommended nominees brought to the Executive Committee for consideration
- ❖ In all other races where the Committee has voted to make a recommendation to endorse, decisions will be strictly by majority rule

- ❖ When the final vote is taken after all deliberations, there can be no “second” vote. The majority vote wins
- ❖ Per NDC and ODC bylaws, there are NO secret ballots permitted
- ❖ **Nominating Committees shall never recommend more candidates than the openings that exist**

Executive Committee endorsement restrictions

- ❖ The Executive Committee is limited to endorsing only up to the number of openings in that race
- ❖ In field races, committee recommendations can be voted on by slate for the same office (i.e. City Council slate, School Board slate)
- ❖ If the slate does not receive 2/3 majority vote of the Executive Committee, then the Executive Committee shall vote on each individual candidate. The candidates with the highest number of votes shall be endorsed up to the number of seats that exist
- ❖ For all non-field race offices, each office shall be voted on for endorsement individually
- ❖ The candidate with the majority of the Executive Committee votes in a non-field race shall be the endorsed candidate
- ❖ When the final Vote is taken after all discussions, there can be no “second” vote. The Executive Committee will go by the Majority
- ❖ Per NDC and ODC by-laws, there are NO secret ballots allowed
- ❖ **The Executive Committee shall not consider for endorsement any candidate that did not submit a questionnaire or sit for an endorsement interview**
- ❖ **The Executive Committee shall never recommend more candidates than the openings that exist**

