

# Democratic Woman's Club of San Diego County

## Candidate Endorsement Policy

Approved September 8, 2017 (Rev: January 2022)

### I. GOALS

The principal goal of the Democratic Woman's Club of San Diego County (DWC-SD) endorsements is to increase the number of qualified Democrats in leadership positions. DWC-SD endorses candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to advocating for women's issues, promoting Democratic values and who have demonstrated involvement with, support of, and responsiveness to, Democratic policies and policy aspirations.

### II. CRITERIA FOR ENDORSEMENT

1. Only Democratic candidates may be endorsed by the Club.
2. Only one candidate may be endorsed per seat. An endorsement means that the Club recommends a vote for that candidate rather than any other candidate for that seat. It does not necessarily mean that the Club supports all the candidate's positions.
3. Qualifications: In deciding whether to issue an endorsement, DWC-SD will consider, among other things, the following factors:
  - a. the extent to which a candidate has demonstrated involvement with, support of and responsiveness to, issues prioritized by the Club
  - b. demonstrated commitment to equal opportunity and equal justice under the law
  - c. integrity, character and common sense
  - d. membership in and demonstrated support of community organizations, including, but not limited to, those related to the advancement of Democratic values.
4. Candidates wishing to be considered for an endorsement or acceptable rating must meet ONE of the following criteria:
  - a. They have completed a DWC-SD candidate questionnaire
  - b. They are declared a friendly incumbent by the Endorsement Committee, with approval of the membership
  - c. They are eligible candidates for statewide or national office
5. The Club may rate any ballot proposition as "Support," "Oppose," or "No Position."
6. The Club may choose any of the following options for rating candidates who are **not endorsed** by the Club:
  - a. "Acceptable" — Circumstances justifying this rating include, but are not limited to: (i) the candidate does not qualify for an endorsement, however the Club feels

the person is supportable, (ii) the candidate has a good record and/or good position statements, however the Club disagrees with the candidate on one or more significant issues, (iii) there is more than one good candidate, and the Club prefers to rate some or each as acceptable rather than endorse a single candidate.

- b. “Not Recommended” — Circumstances justifying this rating include, but are not limited to, the determination that the candidate has a poor position or record on one or more critical issues. A motion to rate a candidate “Not Recommended,” must be debated by the Club before it is voted on, with up to three speakers for and against the motion.
- c. “No Position”—Circumstances justifying this rating include but are not limited to the following: (i) not enough information is known about the candidate, (ii) the candidate has demonstrated a lack of responsiveness, (iii) the candidate appears to be between the ratings of “Acceptable” “and “Not Recommended”, (iv) it would not be politically expedient to take a position.
- d. It only requires a majority of eligible voters present and voting to rate a candidate one of the above.

### III. PROCEDURES

#### A. PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION

1. Candidates seeking an endorsement must comply with the following procedures:
  - a. Inform a member of the Club Endorsement Committee or a DWC-SD Officer in writing of her/his intent to request the Club’s endorsement or be listed on the San Diego County Democratic Party webpage as a candidate.
  - b. Upon notification of this request, the Endorsement Committee will determine the criticality of the candidate’s race in the current election cycle and, when added to the calendar, forward these Policies and Procedures and a Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire to the candidate.
  - c. Forward the following information to the Endorsement Committee:
    - i. Completed Questionnaire
    - ii. Resumé and other materials the candidate considers relevant to their qualifications
2. Upon completion of the assessment described above, the Endorsement Committee may, in its discretion, interview candidates and/or invite the candidate to give a five-minute speech to the DWC-SD members at a meeting where endorsement votes are scheduled.

## B. PROCEDURES FOR VOTING

1. Club endorsements of candidates for public office and club positions on ballot propositions may be determined at any properly noticed club meeting, provided that a quorum is present and that members are notified of the races or ballot measures which are to be considered for endorsement or rating at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting.
2. When there is support for more than one qualified candidate in a race, the discussion guidelines will be as follows:
  - a. The group will first decide whether to endorse in the race. Up to three members advocating for or against an endorsement shall be recognized by the meeting chair, with each side provided equal opportunity to address the membership. Discussion may be limited to one or two minutes per speaker. Members shall be instructed that the threshold question for consideration is whether to endorse in a particular race. After the discussion of endorsement, a vote is taken, consistent with the bylaws.
  - b. Following a decision to endorse, the members may discuss the individual merits of endorsing a particular candidate. Up to three (3) members for and against each candidate shall be recognized by the meeting chair, with each side provided equal opportunity to address the membership. Discussion may be limited to one or two minutes per speaker.
  - c. Discussion will be limited to members in good standing as of the beginning of the meeting.
  - d. DWC-SD Endorsement Committee members who are working for or actively supporting a candidate will disclose this fact and recuse themselves from engaging in the endorsement process while that candidate is being considered, limiting themselves to casting their vote like any other member.
3. A quorum is 10% of the members in good standing at the time of the meeting. Those eligible to vote for endorsements of a candidate or must be a General Member in good standing who has attended at least two (2) prior meetings, as a member, in the previous twelve (12) months. Proxy voting not permitted. Candidates and their staff members, who are otherwise eligible to vote, are also eligible to vote on all endorsements.
4. An affirmative vote of at least sixty percent (60%) of all votes cast shall be required to endorse a candidate or take a position on a ballot proposition.

5. In races where there are more than two qualified candidates running for the same seat, the members will vote using the ranked choice process. (See Addendum 1 for Ranked Choice Voting Procedures)
6. No candidate or their paid staff may be present during debate on their specific endorsement or recommendation.
7. For virtual meetings, eligible voting members will receive a link to a secure online ballot at least five (5) days prior to the meeting and will be able to vote anytime between receipt of the ballot and close of voting on the day of the meeting. With that early voting feature some members may choose to vote, but not attend the meeting and that is permitted.
8. For in-person meetings and the rating of candidates voting may be done by a show of hands in races where no more than two candidates are running.
9. Voting on any endorsement shall be by secret ballot when requested by any member eligible to vote, when the meetings are virtual or when there are three or more candidates running and ranked choice ballots are required.
10. The Endorsement Committee shall recommend the selection of races and propositions to be included on the slate for consideration. The selection may be modified by a majority vote of those eligible members present and voting.
11. These rules may be suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting, provided that a quorum is present. These rules may be amended by motion of a member with a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting at any properly called club meeting, provided that a quorum is present, and notice of the proposed amendment was included with the notice of the meeting.
12. Any endorsement or rating given by DWC-SD may be withdrawn at any time upon a vote of 60% of the members present and voting at a general meeting at which a quorum is present. This provision shall apply to Friendly Incumbent Endorsements in addition to all other endorsements or ratings.

#### C. PROCEDURES FOR FRIENDLY INCUMBENT ENDORSEMENTS

1. Friendly incumbent endorsements may be considered for all incumbents who have a supportive voting record on appropriate issues, as determined by a unanimous vote of the Endorsement Committee.
2. The friendly incumbent endorsement is intended to reward incumbents for their support.
3. A friendly incumbent endorsement does not require the completion of a questionnaire or attendance at an endorsement meeting.

4. The Endorsement Committee may determine eligibility for a friendly incumbent endorsement for an incumbent who has no voting record by virtue of holding an administrative, executive or other non-legislative office.
5. Where an incumbent has a known Democratic challenger, the office will be treated as open. All candidates for that office (including the incumbent) will then be required to follow the standard endorsement procedure.

#### D. ALLOCATION OF CLUB FUNDS

1. Club fundraising activities may only be conducted for the campaigns of those candidates endorsed by the Club and those ballot propositions earning a rating of "Support." The Club, by a 60% vote, may designate certain races/issues as "priority campaigns" to indicate that those campaigns should be given priority in terms of fundraising or club-coordinated volunteer efforts.

#### IV. CONFIDENTIALITY

Documents submitted to DWC-SD may be shared with club members.

## ADDENDUM 1 – Ranked Choice Voting Procedures

### I. Ranked Choice Ballots

- A. Ballots for races in which there are more than two (2) qualified Democratic candidates will be prepared either electronically or printed on paper in a Ranked Choice Voting format.
  - 1. Each ballot will list each of the candidates' names and the option for "no Endorsement" in the first column, and two blank columns to allow the member to select their first and second choice among the candidates.
  - 2. Ballots will be distributed to each eligible club member and will be collected after all candidates and supporting or opposing club members for that race have spoken.
  - 3. In a virtual environment, a link to the ballots will be distributed via email to each eligible club member.

### II. Marking Your Ballot

- A. Each voting member may select their first and second choices in order of preference. At any stage of ranking their choices they may select "No Endorsement" if they do not think that any candidate or remaining candidates should have the seal of this club's endorsement.
- B. In a virtual environment, ballots will be electronic. In those races where there are three (3) or more candidates, members will be asked to vote for a first and second choice candidate by dragging the candidate names from the box on the left to the box on the right in their preferred order.

### III. Counting Ballots

- A. After all ballots have been collected, they will be taken for counting by official Endorsement Committee designated counters.
- B. When voting virtually, after all voting has been closed, the official Endorsement Committee designated counters will move to a separate Zoom breakout room to tabulate and validate results. Our voting tool should prevent any ballots from being considered "spoiled".
- C. A candidate (or "No Endorsement" position) must receive 60% or more of First Choice votes on ballots to win the endorsement of DWCSO outright.
- D. Any ballots that are illegible, marked in an invalid manner, or where voter intent on given ballot choices cannot be determined will be designated as "spoiled" and will still count toward the overall number of ballots cast for meeting thresholds but not be added to any candidate's total vote count.

- E. If no one candidate wins 60% or more on the count of First Choice votes, ballots cast with First Choice for all candidates except the top two will be re-tabulated for those members' Second Choice vote.
- F. If no candidate (or the "No Endorsement" selection) shall receive a full 60% or more of member votes, the default result will be of the Club having "No Position", or a member may move to rate any or all candidates "Acceptable" or "Not Recommended".
- G. If the "No Endorsement" selection attains 60% of the member vote at any point in the tabulation, the Club will take an official stance of not endorsing any candidate in the race.

#### IV. Samples

##### A. Sample Ballot

Candidate Name	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice
Candidate A		
Candidate B		
Candidate C		
Candidate D		
No Endorsement		

##### B. Sample Vote Tally Process

1. Assume 50 members voting – 60% = 30 votes
2. Vote Tally Sheet

Candidate Name	First Choice	Second Choice	Final Total
A	6	Eliminated	X
B	20	+10	30
C	12	+0	12
D	8	Eliminated	X
No Endorsement	4	+4	8

3. When we count 1<sup>st</sup> choice A got 6 votes, B got 20, C got 12, D got 8 and No Endorsement got 4
4. We retain the top 2 candidates per our Endorsement policy and eliminate candidates A and D (We always retain No Endorsement as an option)

5. We then look at the 14 ballots for the candidates that were eliminated and count how many of those ballots voted for B, C or No Endorsement as 2<sup>nd</sup> choice
6. We add those 2<sup>nd</sup> choice votes to the count for B, C and No Endorsement
7. 10 people voted B second choice and 4 people voted No endorsement 2<sup>nd</sup> place, 0 people voted C 2<sup>nd</sup> choice
8. We add 10 to Candidate B and 4 to No Endorsement.
9. Candidate B is endorsed.