



State Conventions Explained

Overview

Inside the Michigan Democratic Party, State Conventions are a yearly occurrence that offer members an opportunity to collectively make decisions on the future of the Party. There are three types of convention:

1. **Nominating Convention:** Takes place in the fall of each even numbered year. Exists to nominate candidates for certain statewide office (Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Supreme Court, State Education Boards, University Boards of the University of Michigan, Michigan State, and Wayne State.).
2. **Endorsement Convention:** Takes place in the spring of even numbered during statewide elections (beginning in 2018 and taking place every four years thereafter). This convention is optional and may or may not be called by the State Central Committee. Exists to offer the Party's endorsement of certain statewide candidates (Attorney General, Secretary of State, State Supreme Court).
3. **Party Leadership Convention:** Takes place in the spring of each odd numbered year. Exists to elect MDP Statutory Officers, State Central Committee Members, and Congressional District Officers. Most, but not all, constituency caucuses meet on the day of convention to elect caucus leaders.

Who calls the State Convention?

Michigan Election Law lays out the timing and purpose for most conventions. However, it is ultimately the State Central Committee that calls the convention and mandates rule, processes, and purposes of a convention. This must be done more than 60 days before the convention is to be held.

Who participates?

While State Conventions are open to all Democrats, only those who have been members for at least thirty (30) days prior to the convention may vote or run for party office. Precinct Delegates and Democratic nominees to partisan office also have voting rights, provided they join the Party before receiving their credentials.

Why attend local conventions?

Depending on where you live, your county or district party will call a convention prior to each state convention. The purpose: to elect members and alternates of Convention Committees (Rules, Credentials, Resolutions) and, depending on the convention, to debate and consider resolutions to send to the State Party. Committee members meet prior to convention to agree on the rules of convention and decide which resolutions, if any, should be considered by the full convention. The Credentials Committee only meets if there are issues credentialing members the day of convention.

How are votes cast at convention?

Proportional voting is mandated on the convention floor and in the election of the State Central Committee and District Executive Committee. The use of proportional voting, while often misunderstood & maligned, actually helps the Party ensure fairness in our elections in two ways: 1.) competing slates are awarded a piece of the pie in proportion to their performance and 2.) every county receives its full allocation of delegate votes that it is entitled to.

In the races for State Central and the Executive Committee, the most common voting method is list/slate voting. Here's how it works:

- ❖ A slate of individuals is put together which includes as many people as there are slots to be filled. Members may also run as a slate of one. The slate is placed into nomination when nominations are called for.
- ❖ The order in which the names are listed is the order in which they will be elected.
- ❖ In multi county districts, voters from each county will be weighed against the State Allocation of Delegate Votes (SADV) which is always based on the number of votes cast in the last statewide election.
- ❖ Each voter may cast one vote for a slate.
- ❖ Members express their preference, usually by raising their credential when their preferred slate is called, and the results are then tabulated. Based upon the tabulation, seats are then awarded.

Still have questions? Contact us by phone at (517) 371-5410 or by email at midemparty@michigandems.com.