

## **Michigan Democratic Party Disability Caucus By-Laws**

### **Article 1. Name and Membership**

This organization shall be known as the Michigan Democratic Party Disability Caucus. Its membership shall consist of persons who support disability interests and concerns. Voting members must be members of the Michigan Democratic Party.

All Disability Caucus members must sign an official written or electronic Disability Caucus membership form in order to join and vote in a Disability Caucus meeting. Any member of the Michigan Democratic Party with voting rights and joins the Disability Caucus may participate and vote at Disability Caucus general meetings. Membership applications for the Disability Caucus and the Michigan Democratic Party will be available at Disability Caucus activities and on the Disability Caucus website.

The Disability Caucus shall be a non-profit organization and upon its dissolution, all assets and real or personal property of the Disability Caucus and its committees and work groups shall revert to the benefit of the Michigan Democratic Party. No part of the income or assets of the Disability Caucus shall transfer to any of its members or non-members, except for the reimbursement of actual expenses or reasonable compensation for services as approved by at least two of the Officers.

### **Article 2. Purpose**

Whereas We, the Disability Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party are here to give a voice to the voiceless.

Whereas We are here to help educate and inspire those with disabilities.

Whereas We are here to battle the injustices that society and lawmakers have thrust upon us.

Whereas We are here to eradicate stigma.

Whereas We are here to help mobilize those who are able and willing to make changes to policies to impact those with disabilities for a better world.

Whereas We are here to enlighten society about what disabilities are and what people with disabilities are truly capable of.

Whereas We are here to help make possible the dreams of people with disabilities by eliminating laws that block them from their full potential.

Whereas We are here to unite, provide strength, compassion, and equality for all living beings.

Therefore, we will follow all ADA and Michigan Disability Laws.

Therefore, let it be resolved that the Disability Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party shall hold regular meetings with a set agenda, organizing the citizens of this great state whom have disabilities to stand together on our issues bringing about change.

Be it further resolved, that the Disability Caucus shall keep record of all meetings and financial reporting that will be held for public record.

### **Article 3. Fundamental Principles**

**Section 1.** All public meetings of the Disability Caucus shall be open to anyone regardless of actual or perceived race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, economic status, religion, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance or disability.

**Section 2.** The public meetings will not just be open to those in the Democratic Party, but also to those that are allies with disability interests. We must acknowledge that the Disability Caucus may need experts to come to the meetings to speak about certain issues the Caucus is discussing. These allies may not be current members of the MDP or Disability Caucus, but are vital to collecting facts and information. They may also want to come to meetings to hear our discussions for their own benefit. We will work hard to encourage these people to join the Michigan Democratic Party and Disability Caucus.

**Section 3.** There will be no test for membership in, nor any oaths of loyalty to the Disability Caucus shall be required or used which has the effect of requiring prospective or current members to condone or support discrimination on the grounds of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion/lack of religion, sex, age, national origin, economic status, ethnic identity, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, physical appearance or disability.

**Section 4.** The time and place for all public meetings of the Disability Caucus shall be publicized fully and in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons. Such meetings must be held in places accessible to all, especially those persons who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices and appliances, and large enough to accommodate all interested persons.

**Section 5.** All notifications of meetings shall include the following announcement: "No Fragrances, Please. For the health and comfort of our chemically sensitive members, please refrain from wearing perfume, cologne, and other scented personal care products on your body, hair, and clothing." Coordinators of meetings shall reserve a clearly-designated, fragrance-free, safe zone for people with chemical sensitivities and other fragrance issues at all meetings. Anyone asked to leave a safe zone will leave immediately.

**Section 6.** The Disability Caucus shall publicize fully and in such a manner as to assure notice to all interested parties a full description of the legal and practical procedures for selection of Disability Caucus officers and representatives. Publication of these procedures shall be done in such a fashion that all prospective and current members of the Disability Caucus will be fully and adequately informed of the pertinent procedure in time to participate in each selection procedure of the Disability Caucus.

**Section 7.** The Disability Caucus shall publicize fully and in such a manner as to assure notice to all interested parties a full description of the legal and practical procedures for selection

of Disability Caucus officers and representatives. Publication of these procedures shall be done in such a fashion that all prospective candidates or applicants for any elected or appointed position within the Disability Caucus will have full and adequate opportunity to compete for office.

**Section 8.** The Disability Caucus shall use means for those that have hearing and visual impairments so as they are able to participate at public meetings. An interpreter will be used if needed if there are members with hearing impairments. Publications in Braille shall be used if there are members with visual impairments.

**Section 9.** Proportional voting shall be used in the election of the Officers and the Executive Committee of the Disability Caucus.

**Section 10.** All rules and bylaws of the Disability Caucus shall be consistent with the rules and bylaws of the Michigan Democratic Party, and shall be available by request in writing to any member of the Disability Caucus.

**Section 11.** The unit rule is prohibited in the Disability Caucus.

**Section 12.** No rule shall be adopted on any level of the Disability Caucus which would require a person to cast a vote or be recorded a voting contrary to that person's judgement.

**Section 13.** On all questions or procedure not resolved by the rules of the Michigan Democratic Party or the bylaws, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall be used.

**Section 14.** Votes shall not be taken by secret ballot at any meeting of the Disability Caucus at any level.

#### **Article 4. Officers and Executive Committee**

**Section 1.** The Officers shall be a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. Either the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson must be a person with a disability and be of opposite gender. Officers shall have 2 year terms and be elected by a simple majority of the votes cast at a meeting of the Disability Caucus during the annual Michigan State Convention. Vacancies among the Officers shall be filled by a simple majority of the votes cast at the next posted meeting of the Disability Caucus.

**Section 2.\*\*** The Executive Committee shall consist of the 4 Officers, and the 28 two Congressional Coordinators, one of each gender, with a female and a male Coordinator for each of the 14 congressional districts. The elected members shall serve 2 year terms and be elected during the Disability Caucus meeting at a convention. The congressional districts that have at least 10 Caucus members present at the Disability Caucus meeting at a convention, shall elect their female and male Coordinators by majority vote for each Coordinator. For districts with less than 10 members present shall elect temporary female and male Coordinators by majority vote for each Coordinator. For districts without representation, The party officers and Regional Coordinators will help convene a special election within their district as soon as possible.

**Section 3.** If an Officer or Representative resigns, abandons his/her position or becomes incapacitated or dies, then an election will be held. Vacancies to the open position will be filled by whoever wins a plurality of votes at the next general membership meeting.

**Section 4.** To run as a candidate in the Executive Committee for the MDP Disability Caucus, the candidate must have been a member of the MDP Disability Caucus for at least 30 days. To vote for a candidate filling a vacancy, one must have been a member for at least 30 days. To vote in a general meeting, one must have been a member of the Disability Caucus for 30 days.

**Section 5.** The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Disability Caucus and have such other duties as are usual to the office of chairperson, or that may be required by the Michigan Democratic Party. The Chairperson in cooperation with the Vice Chairperson and the Treasurer will create and present an annual budget to the Executive Committee for approval, including fundraising plans, and goals and expenditure purposes, and expected amounts. Brief quarterly budget updates will be created and presented to the Executive Committee.

**Section 6.** The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson in the discharge of his/her duties, and shall temporarily assume the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson in his/her absence.

**Section 7.** The Secretary of the Disability Caucus shall keep an accurate record and minutes of the proceedings of all meetings. He/She shall keep and preserve all the books, documents, correspondences, records, minutes, effects, and any other property of the Disability Caucus, and when a new Secretary is elected, deliver all of the aforesaid items kept and preserved to the new Secretary. He/She shall see that proper notification is given of all Caucus meetings.

**Section 8.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for the financial receipts and disbursements of the Disability Caucus subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. The funds of the Disability Caucus shall be deposited in banks, and shall be drawn upon only by checks signed by any two of the following Officers: Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer. The Treasurer shall make financial reports to the Executive Committee and the Caucus. When a new Treasurer is elected, the past treasurer shall forthwith deliver to the new treasurer the funds and all the books kept during his/her tenure in office.

## **Article 5. Meetings**

**Section 1.** The regular meetings of the Disability Caucus Executive Committee shall be on the date and at the location and time set forth in the meeting notice. The Executive Committee shall meet quarterly in person or by conference call. At least five days' notice shall be given for the meeting. Notice will be given by phone, e-mail and Facebook.

**Section 2.** At least once per calendar year there shall be a full membership meeting of the Disability Caucus where the Officers and the Executive Committee shall report on Caucus activities. At least 5 days' notice shall be given for the date, time and location. Notice will be given by phone and e-mail.

**Section 3.** Special meetings of the Executive Committee of the Disability Caucus or full membership may be called by a majority of the Executive Committee or full membership, respectively. At least 5 days' notice shall be given for the date, time and location. Notice will be given by phone and e-mail.

**Section 4.** Meetings of the Officers and of the Executive Committee shall be the times when major activities of the Disability Caucus at the State Level are proposed, discussed and decisions made in the name of the Disability Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party. Major activities include approval by the Officers of

- a. endorsements by the Disability Caucus for Democratic candidates for partisan and nonpartisan positions, including suggestions from local Disability Caucus chapters,
- b. negotiations and agreements for the Disability Caucus to formally work with other Democratic Party or other progressive groups on Democratic Party candidate campaigns, petition drives and other political efforts, and
- c. other activities that would involve large amounts of time, energy and funding by our Caucus members and supporters. Such major activity decisions by the Officers are considered as recommendations to the Executive Committee for its discussion, amendment and approval or disapproval at its next mid-year, quarterly or monthly meeting.

**Section 5.** Subject to the Rules of the Michigan Democratic Party and these bylaws, all meetings of the Disability Caucus shall be conducted according to the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

## **Article 6. Committees**

**Section 1.** The Chairperson, subject to the approval of the majority of the Executive Committee, shall appoint the committees and the committee chairpersons necessary for the work of the Disability Caucus.

**Section 2.** Standing Committees may include the following:

1. Rules and Bylaws Committee
2. Finance Committee
3. Fundraising Committee
4. Candidate Recruitment Committee
5. Political Organizing Committee
6. Communications Committee
7. Policy and Resolutions Committee
8. Campaign Committee

9. Events Committee
10. Endorsements Committee
11. Outreach Committee

These committees shall include appropriate subcommittees. The Chairperson of the Caucus shall be the ex-officio member of all standing committees.

#### **Article 7. Endorsements**

Candidates seeking the endorsement of the Disability Caucus shall submit their names and information about their candidacy. They shall be presented at the following meeting of the executive board. An endorsement will be granted if at least 2/3 of the executive board members in attendance vote in favor.

#### **Article 8. Monetary Exchange**

The bank account for the Disability Caucus will be in the names of the Chair and Treasurer. Any amount under \$24.99 being withdrawn from the account, will not need approval from the committee. Any amount \$25.00-\$199.00, will need two-thirds majority vote from the executive committee to complete the withdrawal. Any amount \$250 or greater will need a two-thirds majority vote from the membership to complete the withdraw.

#### **Article 9. Order of Business**

At meetings, the business of the organization shall proceed in the following order:

1. Roll call of Officers
2. Approval of Proposed Agenda
3. Approval of Previous Minutes
4. Reports of Officers:
  - a. Chair
  - b. Vice Chair
  - c. Treasurer (Financial Report)
  - d. Secretary (Correspondence)
  - e. Regional Directors
  - f. Congressional District Coordinators
  - g. Chiefs of Committees
  - h. Chiefs of Work Groups
  - i. Other Officers
5. Old Business
6. Postponed Business
7. New Business
8. Comments for Good and Welfare
9. Adjournment

#### **Article 10. Amendments**

**Section 1.** Proposals for changes or amendments to these bylaws shall first be referred to the Rules and Bylaws Committee, which shall report its recommendations to the next regular Caucus meeting or special meeting called for that purpose.

**Section 2.** These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Disability Caucus at a meeting, provided that a written notice setting forth the proposed amendment has been given to all Caucus members at least 2 weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

**Section 3.** These bylaws shall be in full force and effect upon their adoption and shall supersede all bylaws, rules, motions and policies of a contrary nature, with the exception of the rules of the Michigan Democratic Party.