

Bylaws of the Democratic Socialists of America Santa Cruz

Adopted October 7, 2017

ARTICLE I. Name.

The name of the Local Chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) in Santa Cruz County, California, shall be the Democratic Socialists of America Santa Cruz – herein referred to as either “Democratic Socialists of America Santa Cruz,” “DSA Santa Cruz,” “Local Chapter,” or “the Local.” DSA is a not-for-profit corporation.

ARTICLE II. Purpose.

DSA Santa Cruz seeks to facilitate the transition to a truly democratic and socialist society, one in which the means/resources of production are democratically and socially controlled.

DSA rejects an economic order based solely on private profit, alienated labor, gross inequalities of wealth and power, discrimination based on race, gender or sexual orientation, and brutality and violence in defense of the status quo.

DSA envisions a humane social order based on popular control of resources, production, and economic planning, equitable distribution, gender and racial equality, and non-oppressive relationships.

Our concept of socialism is a profoundly democratic one. It is rooted in the belief that human beings should be free to develop to their fullest potential, that public policies should be determined not by wealth but by popular participation, and that individual liberties should be carefully safeguarded. It is committed to a freedom of speech that does not recoil from dissent, to a freedom to organize independent trade unions, women’s groups, political parties, and other formations -- recognizing these as essential bulwarks against the dangers of an intrusive state. It is committed to a freedom of religion that acknowledges the rights of those for whom spiritual concerns are central.

We are socialists because we are developing a concrete strategy for achieving that vision. In the present, we are building a visible socialist presence within the broad democratic Left. In the long run, we hope to build a majority movement capable of making democratic socialism a reality in the United States. Our strategy acknowledges the class structure of the U.S. society. This class structure means that there is a basic conflict of interest between those sectors with enormous economic power and the vast majority of the population.

ARTICLE III. Membership.

Section 1. Membership.

Members of DSA Santa Cruz will be those individuals whose dues to national DSA are paid in full, who reside and/or work within the borders of Santa Cruz County as outlined in Appendix A. Individuals may not be members of the DSA Santa Cruz without being members of national DSA. It will be the responsibility of members to approve policies and guidelines for the operation of the Local, to elect delegates to the national convention, to vote on matters related to national policy, and to make recommendations on issues and other matters to the National Political Committee of DSA.

Section 2. Removal of Members.

If a member in good standing is found to be in substantial disagreement with the principles or policies of national DSA, or if they are found to be consistently engaging in undemocratic, disruptive behavior, or if they are found to be under the discipline of any self-defined democratic centralist organization, the Local may vote to expel them from the DSA Santa Cruz. In order for such a finding to be made, another

DSA member must formally prefer written charges against the member in question to the DSA Santa Cruz Executive Committee, which shall set the date of a meeting of the Local for deliberations on the charges. The member in question must receive a copy of the written charges and notice of the meeting a minimum of two weeks before that meeting takes place. Expulsion of a member requires a two-thirds vote of the Local meeting. An expelled member in good standing may appeal to the National Political Committee of DSA.

Section 3. Voluntary Donations.

As mandated by the national constitution and bylaws, the Local may establish a pledge system of voluntary donations for its members. The payment of a donation to the Local may not be a requirement for voting or for holding Local Chapter office.

Section 4. Privacy concerns.

Care will be taken to protect the privacy of each member's contact information.

ARTICLE IV. Local Chapter Meetings.

Section 1. General Meeting.

The Local Chapter will hold a minimum of one General Meeting annually for purposes of electing officers. All members of the Local Chapter will be sent notice of and an agenda for the General Meeting. Notice may be sent by electronic means, but individuals who have not provided an email address must be sent a paper copy. The General Meeting will elect Local Chapter officers and may adopt an annual budget. In general, it is the highest legislative body of the Local Chapter. The General Meeting may coincide with a Regular Meeting.

Section 2. Regular Meetings.

The Local Chapter will hold Regular Meetings at least four times annually, the time and place of which shall be set in a schedule published and distributed by the Local Chapter Executive Committee. The Regular Meetings will set Local Chapter policy and work priorities, and they will include political education sessions.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee will set the agenda for Regular Meetings. In general, the Regular Meeting is the operating legislative body of the Local Chapter.

Section 3. Emergency Meetings.

The DSA Santa Cruz Executive Committee may call an Emergency Meeting of the Local Chapter on five days' notice when an urgent and important matter requires deliberation.

Section 4. Quorum.

A quorum of 10 percent of the members (but not fewer than four persons) is required for General, Regular, or Emergency Meetings to transact business.

ARTICLE V. Local Chapter Officers: Powers and Duties.

Section 1. Officers and Terms.

The officers of DSA Santa Cruz will be Co-Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, and Social Media Coordinator. The term of office will be one year, and shall run from February 1 to January 31 or until their successors are elected. The officers may not all be of the same gender.

Section 2. Vacancies.

In the event of a vacancy in any Local Chapter office, the Local Chapter Executive Committee will appoint a replacement for the remainder of the term.

Section 3. Co-Chairs.

a. The Co-Chairs will be the chief executive officers of the Local Chapter. They will preside over Local Chapter and Executive Committee meetings or will appoint a substitute to assume the powers and duties of the presiding officer as specified in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. The Co-Chairs will be the official public spokespersons for the Local Chapter and will initiate such actions and policies as the Local Chapter's general welfare may demand.

b. The Co-Chairs will be responsible also for coordinating the day-to-day operations and political work of the Local Chapter's branches and committees.

c. The Co-Chairs will report to Local Chapter Regular Meetings on the business of the Executive Committee Meetings, at which time a copy of the minutes of those meetings will be available for inspection.

Section 4. Secretary.

a. The Secretary will be responsible for answering all correspondence and queries of the Local Chapter, and for maintaining an up-to-date membership list of the Local Chapter. They will insure effective communication with national DSA. They will temporarily assume the responsibilities of the Co-Chair, if neither Co-Chair is able to do so.

b. The Secretary will be responsible also for the taking of minutes of all Local Chapter and Executive Committee Meetings, and shall have custody of these minutes, and the resolutions, reports and other official records of the Local Chapter. They shall transfer official records in good condition to their successor. Official records shall include meeting minutes and member lists.

Section 5. Treasurer.

The Treasurer will be responsible for the funds and financial records of the Local Chapter. All funds collected by the Local Chapter will be turned over to the Treasurer, who shall deposit them in a bank account under the name of the DSA Santa Cruz. In cooperation with the Secretary, the Treasurer will be responsible for ensuring that membership dues are paid up-to-date. The Treasurer will prepare the annual Local Chapter budget and deliver the Local Chapter financial report to the General Meeting of the Local Chapter, as well as periodic progress reports as requested by the Executive Committee of the Local Chapter.

Section 6. Social Media Coordinator.

The Social Media Coordinator will be responsible for managing the social media communications of the DSA Santa Cruz.

Section 7. Additional Duties.

The Local Chapter Executive Committee may assign additional temporary duties to an officer of the Local Chapter, so long as such assignments do not conflict with the designation of responsibilities outlined in these Bylaws.

ARTICLE VI. Executive Committee.

Section 1. Composition.

The DSA Santa Cruz Executive Committee will be composed of the five officers of the Local Chapter and the chair(s) of any Local Chapter branches. It will also have one representative from each Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) chapter in the Santa Cruz County, California, area, as outlined in Article VII, Section 1.

Section 2. Duties.

a. The Executive Committee administers the affairs of the Local and oversees the implementation of the decisions of the General and Regular Meetings; it may also propose policy to the General and Regular Meetings. It shall have the power to receive reports of any committee or branch, and advise thereon, to call emergency meetings of the Local, and to act on any matter that requires immediate and urgent action. The Executive Committee is the regular executive body of the Local, and thus subordinate to its Legislative bodies, the General and Regular Meetings.

b. The Executive Committee will be responsible for establishing program activities for the Local Chapter, for proposing guidelines and policies that will subsequently be voted on by members in good standing of DSA, and for acting on the organization's behalf between Local Chapter meetings.

Section 3. Meetings.

The meetings of the Executive Committee will be held at the call of one of the Co-Chairs at such intervals as may be determined by a prior Executive Committee Meeting or by consultation with any three members of the Executive Committee. All members of the Executive Committee must (ordinarily) be given four days oral, written, or electronic notice of regular Executive Committee Meetings; a 24-hour notice may be given under special emergency circumstances.

Section 4. Quorum.

A quorum of three of five officers of the Executive Committee is required for the transaction of Executive Committee business.

ARTICLE VII. Branches.

Section 1. Definition.

A branch is a subgroup of the Local Chapter consisting of at least five members in good standing with national DSA. Branches may be defined by geography or language. The chairs of branches will hold membership on the DSA Santa Cruz Executive Committee.

Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) chapters within the geographic area defined by DSA Santa Cruz may affiliate as a branch of the Local Chapter, in which case the local YDSA chapter may send a representative to the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VIII. Committees.

Section 1. Duration.

The Local Chapter will have Ad Hoc Committees or Working Groups, which will exist for a limited and explicit duration. Ad Hoc Committees may be established by a vote of members in good standing at a Regular Meeting of the Local Chapter.

Section 2. Duties.

Chairs of Ad Hoc Committees will keep the Executive Committee and the Regular Meetings of the Local Chapter informed on the activities of the committee.

ARTICLE IX. Delegates to National, Regional, and State Bodies.

Section 1. Convention.

DSA Santa Cruz delegates and alternates to the National Convention will be elected by members in good standing of the Local Chapter of DSA. Elections for the National Convention delegation shall be held on the schedule announced by the national organization.

ARTICLE X. Prohibited Activity

DSA Santa Cruz shall not engage in activity prohibited by the IRS guidelines established for 501 (c) 4 organizations or similar rules established by the state of California. Nor shall the Local Chapter engage in any activity prohibited by resolutions adopted by DSA's National Convention or DSA's National Political Committee.

ARTICLE XI. Elections, Nominations and Recalls.

Section 1. Nominations Committee.

A three-person Nominations Committee shall be established at least one month prior to every election by vote of a Regular Meeting. It shall solicit and receive nominations for the positions to be elected.

Section 2. Nominations Process.

Nominations for Local Chapter officers and delegates to the National Convention shall be opened 10 days before and closed at the election meeting. The call for nominations shall be announced to all members in good standing of DSA as soon as nominations are open.

Section 3. Uncontested Positions.

If a position is uncontested, the nominee may be declared elected by acclamation. If any member objects to such election by acclamation, members must vote "yes" or "no" for the nominee.

ARTICLE XII. Amendments.

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws must be made by written resolution, endorsed by five members of DSA Santa Cruz, and submitted to the Executive Committee a month in advance of a General or Regular Meeting. The Executive Committee is required to provide the Local Chapter membership with two weeks' written or electronic notice of the proposed amendments. The amendment must be approved by a majority vote of two consecutive (Regular or General) Local Chapter meetings.

ARTICLE XIII. Rules of the Local Chapter.

Section 1. Rules.

The Rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern this Local Chapter in cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws. Consensus decision-making is desirable where feasible, but meetings must submit to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised upon the request of a member.

Section 2. Action Out of Order.

Any action taken by an officer or member of the Local Chapter in contravention of these Bylaws is null and void.

APPENDIX A. Scope of the DSA Santa Cruz by ZIP code

The geographic reach of the DSA Santa Cruz is limited to the boundaries of Santa Cruz County, California, and includes the following ZIP codes:

95001 (Aptos); 95003 (Aptos/Seascape/Seacliff); 95005 (Ben Lomond); 95006 (Boulder Creek/Big Basin); 95007 (Brookdale); 95010 (Capitola); 95017 (Davenport); 95018 (Felton); 95019 (Freedom); 95041 (Mount Hermon); 95060 (Santa Cruz/Bonny Doon/Scotts Valley); 95061 (Santa Cruz); 95062 (Santa Cruz); 95063 (Santa Cruz); 95064 (Santa Cruz); 95065 (Santa Cruz); 95066 (Scotts Valley); 95067 (Santa Cruz); 95073 (Soquel); 95076 (Corralitos/La Selva Beach/Royal Oaks/Watsonville); 95077 (Watsonville).