

Progressive Democrats of America National Congressional Endorsement Policy

I General Provisions

A. PDA's mission is to elect a permanent Progressive Democratic Majority to Congress, and we encourage our members and chapters to recruit, support, and endorse progressive candidates at the local and state levels to ensure that progressives build the necessary experience and resumes to win congressional elections.

B. PDA National only endorses Democratic candidates for federal office, with our focus on the House of Representatives, and makes no endorsements in local or state races. Nor does PDA National impose an endorsement policy on chapters for races in their areas for which no PDA National endorsement is sought. If a chapter does make endorsements, PDA has an interest in ensuring that the endorsement process is fair and transparent, and that the chapter utilizes processes, where applicable and if possible, like Instant Run-off Voting, which we wish to institute as policy for elections in general. The following endorsement policy can be used as a guideline for establishing a chapter endorsement policy for state and local races, and for chapter endorsements of federal candidates not seeking a PDA National endorsement. Chapters are encouraged to develop endorsement policies which reflect the challenges and needs of the individual chapters.

C. The process for obtaining a National Endorsement begins at the chapter level and is governed by this policy. In order to ensure that we succeed in building a congressional progressive majority, a candidate who has secured a state or local PDA endorsement by following the procedures below will be evaluated by the PDA Inside the Democratic Party Working Group. The group will assess the candidate's ability to win his or her race using the following criteria: has a detailed and viable campaign plan, demonstrates the capacity to raise the necessary capital to fund the campaign, demonstrates grassroots support, has an organized campaign staff in place, and has in the district an active PDA chapter with at least 5 active members.

D. PDA recognizes that in some instances it may be impossible for chapters to meet some of the requirements of this policy within the state laws governing elections. In these cases, PDA requests that the chapter notify the PDA Inside the Party Action Group of the inconsistency(ies) which prohibits conformity to this policy as soon as the inconsistency is discovered. The chapter should include suggested language which would establish a procedure to allow the endorsement to move forward.

E. This policy must be adhered to in order to gain a National Congressional Endorsement.

II Eligibility

A. PDA Member Requirements

1. In order to be eligible to vote in a Chapter Endorsement Meeting, a person must be:
 - a. A member in good standing of PDA at the national level (in the national database) for a minimum of 10 days,
 - b. A member in good standing of a PDA chapter for a minimum of 10 days, and
 - c. A registered voter within the political boundaries for the race being considered for endorsement.
2. A "member in good standing" means: the member is current on dues, if such apply to the chapter, and meets other reasonable requirements the chapter may set.

B. PDA Chapter Requirements

1. In order to hold an Endorsement Meeting, a chapter must:
 - a. be an established (PDA recognized) chapter for no less than one (1) month, appear on the PDA national website, and be participating with the state's PDA leadership team
 - b. have at least 5 active members in the Congressional District (CD) in which the endorsement is sought.
2. In order to be eligible to hold an Endorsement Meeting, a chapter must also meet these Congressional District (CD) requirements:
 - a. participate in the PDA national fundraising effort by having a chapter fundraising plan which is appropriate to the socio-economic conditions where the chapter is located or demonstrate a commitment to develop the resources to support the endorsement and future activities.
 - b. have a minimum of 100 residents in the PDA national database in the CD in which the endorsement is sought.

D. Candidate Requirements

1. In order to be eligible for a PDA National Endorsement a candidate must:
 - a. be a member of the Democratic Party running on the Democratic Party ticket,
 - b. be a member in good standing of PDA at the National level, and involved with the local chapter, and
 - c. shall provide a written statement or answers to a questionnaire submitted by the chapter to the campaign based on PDA's five priority issues.
2. The candidate should support PDA's goals pertaining to the five priority issues and must pledge to support the Progressive Agenda <http://progressive2008.org/pdf/progressive-agenda-2008.pdf> in order to receive a national endorsement

III Notice

A. Meeting Notice

1. Each PDA member who is registered in the PDA national database and who resides in the Congressional District in which an endorsement for the U.S. House is being considered, shall receive no less than three (3) weeks' notice of a chapter meeting at which a potential endorsement will be discussed and voted upon. This notice must also be sent on the same day to Field@pdamerica.org and to the CD Point Person of that Congressional District, where applicable, and to the State Coordinator.
2. Failure to notify all members and chapters within the Congressional District may result in PDA National voiding the process and could result in failure to obtain a national endorsement.
3. Endorsement Meetings may be held no later than three months prior to Election Day.

B. Candidate Questionnaires and Responses

1. Each Democratic candidate running in the Congressional District where an endorsement is being considered will be emailed a questionnaire at least 21 days prior to the Endorsement Meeting. The candidate will be asked to specifically address his or her positions on PDA's key issues including any issue of great local importance to the CD.

2. A description of the rules for Candidate eligibility (II.D.) and the endorsement voting procedures for endorsement (III.C.4.) and the rules regarding candidate responses (this section) shall be included with the questionnaire.
3. The Campaign must return the responses by email to the Chapter no later than 7 days prior to the Endorsement Meeting and to Field@pdamerica.org.
4. Candidate responses must be sent by the chapter (with assistance from PDA National if necessary) via email to each PDA member in good standing no less than 5 days prior to the Endorsement Meeting. Responses may be posted on the chapter's website, and will be posted on the appropriate state page on pdamerica.org

IV Chapter/CD Endorsement Meeting Procedures

A. General

1. Must meet eligibility requirements as stated in Article II.
2. PDA Chapter/CD national endorsements shall be limited to Democratic Party candidates for federal office.
3. PDA Chapters/CDs reserve the right to endorse no candidate
4. Campaign materials may not be in evidence prior to the balloting.
5. Each candidate or their designee should bring to the meeting an appropriate number of copies of the completed questionnaire for endorsement.

B. Types of Chapter/CD Configurations

1. A chapter may serve a single CD exclusively. In this case, the chapter has a single Endorsement Meeting for that congressional race, and the results of that chapter's vote will determine the endorsement.
2. Some chapters serve more than one CD. That chapter may have as many Endorsement Meetings as CDs it serves, provided that each CD for which it holds a meeting qualifies pursuant to Article II Section B.
3. Some Chapters serve only part of a CD, with one or more adjoining chapters also serving that CD. It is recommended that those chapters hold a joint Endorsement Meeting to decide the endorsement. If separate Endorsement Meetings are held, they must be unanimous in their endorsement of the same candidate for an endorsement to be considered by PDA National.
4. Chapters that serve more than one CD (Item 2) and part of a CD (Item 3) shall follow the procedures in Items 2 and 3 as applicable.

C. Meeting Format

1. A neutral person shall be selected to moderate the meeting.
2. Each candidate shall be given an equal amount of time to speak. The moderator may ask clarifying questions.
3. A formal Q&A by audience members will follow candidate presentations.

D. Voting

1. Balloting will occur only following the presentations and Q&A by candidates or their representatives and shall follow these balloting procedures:
 - a. **One Candidate** -- In cases where only one Democratic Party candidate is seeking an endorsement, the qualified PDA members in attendance will vote "yes" or "no" on the question of endorsement, and a 2/3 majority will decide the question.
 - b. **Two Candidates** -- In cases where two Democratic Party candidates are seeking endorsement for the same office, the ballot will offer a choice between the two candidates and "none of the above." A

candidate receiving 2/3 of the votes of qualified members in attendance shall receive the endorsement.

- c. **Three or More Candidates** -- In situations where three or more Democratic Party candidates are being considered for endorsement for the same office the meeting shall utilize the “Instant Run Off Voting” method of election to decide the question. Qualified members in attendance shall rank the candidates and the “none of the above” option in their order of preference on the ballot. In the event no candidate receives a majority of the “first choice” votes, the candidate or selection with the least votes is eliminated and the second choices of those who chose the eliminated candidate shall be added to the total votes received by the remaining candidates. This procedure will be repeated until a candidate, or the “none of the above” option, has achieved a 2/3 majority, at which time the endorsement by the chapter(s) shall have been determined.

E. Post Voting/Counting the Ballots

1. The ballots shall be counted by at least two teams of two chapter members and recorded on tally sheets.
 - a. The ballots shall be divided equally among the teams.
 - b. Each team’s ballots shall then be divided among the team members, and each team member shall count the votes and record the tally on a tally sheet.
 - c. To reconcile, the team members exchange their ballots and recount and re-tally the ballots. If a discrepancy exists between the two counts, those ballots are passed onto the other team, recounted, and re-tallied to obtain the correct outcome.
 - d. After the teams, as described in Item 1, have completed counting and tallying, the tally sheets are added together to obtain the final outcome of the balloting.
 - e. Representatives from each campaign may be present in the counting room to ensure transparency, but may not touch the ballots or interfere with the counting in any way.
 - f. The moderator shall announce the results of the balloting in percentages of total ballots cast before the meeting adjourns. These results may be posted to the chapter’s website.
2. The results of the balloting shall be transmitted to Field@pdamerica.org by the chapter, along with a written article and photograph of the candidate within 72 hours of the Endorsement Meeting.
3. Challenges
 - a. The ballots will be maintained and sealed for a period of thirty days by the chapter. If there is no challenge to the outcome, the ballots will be destroyed at the end of the thirty day period.
 - b. If a challenge exists, the results may be reopened and different teams shall recount and re-tally the ballots following the procedures in Section 5.

F. Evaluating Candidate Viability for Allocation of Resources

1. Members of the Inside the Democratic Party Working Group will work with endorsing chapters and National PDA to maximize resources to move endorsements forward to ensure victory.
 - a. Membership in this group is open to any active PDA member, however the member must be participating in the group for a period of three months to participate in the endorsement process. The PDA Inside the Party Working Group meets the fourth Thursday of every month, and the minutes of each meeting shall be posted on the PDA website.
2. Candidates will be evaluated based on their viability, as stated in Article I, Section D, and on PDA’s capacity to help the candidate win.
3. The Inside the Democratic Party Working Group will contact each chapter with the results and will forward same to the National Director and the Communications Coordinator of PDA. The decision by the Inside the Democratic Party Working Group is final.