

WASHINGTON COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Constitution and Bylaws

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Washington County Democratic Party
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Table of Contents

Constitution of the Washington County Democratic Party

Preamblev

Principles..... vi

Article I – Name, Party Membership, Party Office, Oath of Office, and Qualifications1

 Section 1. Name1

 Section 2. Party Membership.....1

 Section 3. Party Office1

 Section 4. Oath of Office1

 Section 5. Qualifications1

Article II – Constitutions and Laws1

Article III – County Central Committee2

 Section 1. Purpose.....2

 Section 2. Committee Membership.....2

 Section 3. Organizational Meeting2

 Section 4. Special Meetings.....3

 Section 5. Minutes of Meetings3

 Section 6. Public Participation and Access to Records.....3

 Section 7. Standing Rules and Robert’s Rules of Order.....3

Article IV – Amendment3

Article V – Previous Constitutions4

Bylaws of the Washington County Democratic Party

Chapter 1 – County Executive Committee	
Section 1. Purpose.....	5
Section 2. Membership	5
Section 3. Organizational Meeting	5
Section 4. Officers	6
Chair (“County Chair”).....	6
Vice-Chair	6
Secretary.....	6
Treasurer	6
Sergeant-at-Arms	7
Section 5. Standing Committees	7
Membership and Search.....	7
Budget and Finance.....	7
Audit.....	7
Section 6. Special Committees	7
Section 7. Directors of Organizational Functions.....	7
Chapter 2. Meetings of the Executive Committee	7
Section 1. Regular Meetings.....	7
Section 2. Special Meetings.....	8
Section 3. Minutes of Meetings	8
Section 4. Notice of Meetings.....	8
Section 5. Cancellation of Meetings	8
Section 6. Quorum for Meetings.....	8
Section 7. Public Participation and Access to Records.....	8
Section 8. Standing Rules and Robert’s Rules of Order.....	8
Chapter 3 – Duties and Responsibilities of Members.....	8

Chapter 4 – Pre-Primary Endorsements.....	9
Section 1. Aid and Assistance to State Party-Endorsed Nominees	9
Section 2. Local and District Pre-Primary Endorsements	9
Section 3. Right of Appearance	9
Section 4. Donor Limitations	9
Chapter 5 – Party Unity	10
Chapter 6 – Violation of Constitution and Bylaws.....	10
Section 1. Censure	10
Section 2. Examiners	10
Section 3. Complaint.....	10
Section 4. Report and Decision.....	10
Chapter 7 – Removal from Office	10
Section 1. Termination of Party Membership.....	11
Section 2. Replacement of Officers	11
Section 3. Replacement of Chairs and Members of Standing and Special Committees....	11
Section 4. Replacement of Directors of Organizational Functions.....	11

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Preamble

We, the members of the Washington County Democratic Party, in convention assembled, in order to organize and perpetuate a representative, effective, and responsible party organization at all levels in Washington County, affiliate with and advance the interest of the Democratic Party of the State of Ohio and nationally, sustain and advance the principles of democracy, and uphold human and civil rights and constitutional government, do establish this Constitution and Bylaws.

The Ohio Democratic Party Principles
Adopted 8.29.1998

As the Washington County Democratic Party, we are proud to adopt these principles based on our belief in an Ohio that values opportunity and equality for all its citizens, and respects both the self-reliance of individuals and the benefits of teamwork, to meet the challenges of a fair and just society.

To that end:

We believe that the best government is one that is efficient, yet understanding – a government that is based not on systems or bureaucracies, but on people, ideas and values.

We believe there is no substitute for fair and equal representation and strong public participation in a government chosen by election.

We believe in a government that stands on the side of Ohio's families - that listens, understands and addresses their concerns.

We believe that all Ohioans reap benefits when we, as a state, meet our challenges together. We believe in the equality of all Ohio citizens and condemn any discrimination.

We believe in a society that strengthens Ohio's families and protects our children.

We believe in the rights of all Ohioans to achieve economic security and find affordable housing, to seek good jobs at a livable wage, and protection for our workers in a growing, robust economy.

We believe in a society that puts the health, safety and prosperity of its citizens first, one that promotes excellence in education, choices in quality health care and a healthy environment for all Ohio citizens.

We believe in a society that values community and protects all Ohio citizens from violence and crime.

We believe in a society that respects our elders, who deserve the right to retire with the resources they need and have earned to support themselves in their golden years.

And we believe in pursuing these ideals with honesty and integrity, with respect for the freedoms that we in Ohio are proud to call our own.

Constitution of the Washington County Democratic Party

Article I – Name, Party Membership, Party Office, Oath of Office, and Qualifications

Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Washington County Democratic Party.

Section 2. Party Membership

Membership in this party shall be open to all residents of Washington County in the State of Ohio who support the Constitution of the United States of America, the Constitution of the State of Ohio, the Constitution, Bylaws, and principles of the Ohio Democratic Party, and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Washington County Democratic Party. No person may be a member or may vote on any motion, resolution, nomination, or election at any caucus, convention, meeting, or conference of this party who does not meet the aforesaid qualifications or who is a member of any other political party at that time.

Section 3. Party Office

Any person who meets the membership eligibility requirements of Article I, Section 2, is eligible for election to party office, except as hereinafter limited. There shall be no minimum age requirement for party office save where prescribed by law. No other rules or practices shall be permitted which tend to limit participation in the Washington County Democratic Party.

Section 4. Oath of Office

All persons elected to office in the Washington County Democratic Party shall be required to take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States of America, the Constitution of the State of Ohio, the Constitution, Bylaws, and principles of the Ohio Democratic Party, and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Washington County Democratic Party. Every elected countywide office holder, including the officers of the County Central Committee, and every judge and notary public commissioned in the State of Ohio may administer the oath. The county party shall make a record of each Oath of Office, the date it was taken, and who administered it.

Section 5. Qualifications

If any person's qualifications as a member of the Washington County Democratic Party or eligibility for party office must be determined, the same challenge procedure shall be followed to determine that person's qualifications as provided by the election laws of the State of Ohio.

Article II – Constitutions and Laws

Nothing herein shall conflict with the Constitution of the United States of America, the laws of the United States of America, the Constitution of the State of Ohio, the laws of the State of Ohio, and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Ohio Democratic Party. Any matter which conflicts with any of the aforesaid shall be of no force and effect. All constitutional provisions and laws of the United States of America, the laws of the State of Ohio, and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Ohio Democratic Party are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part hereof. Each clause of this Washington County Democratic Party Constitution and Bylaws shall be considered separately and the illegality or unenforceability of any one clause shall not affect any other clause.

Article III – County Central Committee

Section 1. Purpose

The controlling committee of the Washington County Democratic Party is the County Central Committee, which shall have such powers as are provided to it by law, by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Ohio Democratic Party, and by this Constitution and Bylaws of the Washington County Democratic Party.

Section 2. Committee Membership

Members of the Central Committee shall be elected in the quadrennial presidential primary election and serve a four-year term of office according to the laws of the State of Ohio. In case of vacancies caused by death, resignation, failure to elect, or removal from the precinct which a committee member was chosen to represent, the Committee shall fill the vacancy by appointing by a majority vote a resident and qualified elector in the precinct to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. Each member-elect and each appointed person shall take the Oath of Office to become a member of the Committee.

Section 3. Organizational Meeting

The members-elect of the Central Committee shall meet not earlier than six nor later than fifteen days following the date of the declaration of the results by the board of elections of the quadrennial presidential primary election at a suitable place and time in Marietta, Ohio, to be designated by the retiring chair of the Committee. Notice of such meeting, giving the place and time, shall be sent to each member-elect by the retiring secretary of the Committee by mail or electronic mail if the member-elect opts-in to receipt of the notice by these means, and a copy of the notice shall be posted in the Office of the Board of Elections of Washington County at least five days prior to any such meeting. If the retiring secretary does not issue the call within the time provided by law, such meeting shall be called according to the laws of the State of Ohio. The meeting shall be automatically cancelled when the Washington County Sheriff's Office declares a Level II Emergency and rescheduled according to the laws of the State of Ohio.

The meeting shall be called to order by the retiring chair or secretary or if there is no such officer or if such officer is absent, then as provided by the laws of the State of Ohio. A temporary chair and a secretary shall be chosen, all committee members-elect shall take the Oath of Office, then the Committee shall proceed to organize by the election of a chair, vice-chair, secretary, sergeant-at-arms, and such other officers as the Committee may desire for a four-year term of office.

After election of the officers, the Central Committee shall establish the County Executive Committee. The Central Committee shall elect themselves to the Executive Committee and confer all power and authority of the Central Committee to the Executive Committee save that which the Central Committee shall exercise pursuant to Ohio Election Laws and as a public body subject to Ohio Sunshine Laws. The Central Committee shall authorize the Executive Committee to act for the Central Committee in all other matters pertaining to the welfare, business, operation, and organization of the Central Committee and the Executive Committee during the period of their existence, which shall continue until the sixth day after the date of the declaration of the results by the board of elections of the next quadrennial presidential primary election.

Section 4. Special Meetings

The Chair of the Central Committee, or if there is no such officer or if such officer is absent, then Vice-Chair may issue a call for a special meeting at a suitable place and time in Marietta, Ohio. Notice of such meeting, giving the place and time and the purpose of the meeting, shall be sent to each member by the Secretary of the Committee by mail or electronic mail if the member opts-in to receipt of the notice by these means, and a copy of the notice shall be posted in the Office of the Board of Elections of Washington County at least five days prior to any such meeting. The meeting shall be automatically cancelled when the Washington County Sheriff's Office issues a Level II Emergency and rescheduled according to the laws of the State of Ohio.

Section 5. Minutes of Meetings

Minutes shall be taken of each meeting of the Central Committee and approved by a majority vote of the members, present and voting, at any meeting of the Committee. Minutes shall include a record of each Oath of Office taken, the date it was taken, and who administered it.

Section 6. Public Participation and Access to Records

The Central Committee shall operate in accordance with the Ohio Open Meetings Act, the Ohio Public Records Act, the current edition of the Ohio Sunshine Laws manual published by the Ohio Attorney General, and the Constitution and Bylaws of the Ohio Democratic Party. All meetings of Central Committee shall be open to the public. The time and place of the meetings should be publicized in a manner to assure timely notice to all interested persons. At the sole discretion of the chair of the meeting, individual members of the public who are not members of the Committee may be permitted to speak for a reasonable amount of time, also at the sole discretion of the chair. The Committee is required to provide any person who asks for it a copy of their current governing documents, a copy of meeting minutes for the past 12 months, and a roster of current committee members, to include name and address only and the precinct which that person represents. No other records, other than those readily available at the county board of elections, are required to be provided.

Section 7. Standing Rules and Robert's Rules of Order

All meetings of the Central Committee shall be conducted according to, first, this Constitution and Bylaws; second, operational procedures in Standing Rules that may be adopted or revised at any time by a majority vote of the members, present and voting, at a meeting of the Committee; and last, the procedures in a current edition of Robert's Rules of Order. Voting by secret ballot, unit rule, proxy, or slate is prohibited.

Article IV – Amendment

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by an affirmative vote of sixty percent (60%) of the members of the Central Committee, present and voting, at any meeting called for that purpose. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Chair in writing and copies thereof sent to each member of the Committee at least five days prior to the meeting. It may also be amended by a majority vote of all delegates at a Constitutional Convention called specifically for that purpose. The Secretary of the Central Committee shall submit a copy of this Constitution and Bylaws and immediately report any amendments, changes, or modifications thereto to the Chairperson of the Ohio Democratic Party Executive Committee.

Article V – Previous Constitutions and Bylaws

This Constitution and Bylaws supersedes any and all previous Constitutions and Bylaws of the Washington County Democratic Party and shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Bylaws of the Washington County Democratic Party

Chapter 1 – County Executive Committee

Section 1. Purpose

The County Executive Committee shall act for the County Central Committee in all matters pertaining to the welfare, business, operation, and organization of the Central and Executive Committees and the Washington County Democratic Party, except those duties which the Central Committee shall perform pursuant to Ohio Election Laws and as a public body subject to Ohio Sunshine Laws.

Section 2. Committee Membership

Members of the Executive Committee shall comprise: (a) the Central Committee members elected or appointed in the current quadrennium; (b) former Central Committee members who were elected or appointed in any previous quadrennium but who are not currently Central Committee members; they automatically become at-large members in the current quadrennium; (c) former at-large members of the Executive Committee who were elected or appointed in any previous quadrennium; they automatically become at-large members in the current quadrennium; (d) at-large members elected by the Executive Committee in the current quadrennium; and (e) ex-officio members, to include—Democratic elected public office holders representing voters in Washington County, Democratic Party-endorsed candidates for election to those public offices, the two Democratic members of the Washington County Board of Elections, the Democratic staff members of the Office of the Washington County Board of Elections, the chair of the Democratic Women’s Club, the chair of the Marietta College Democrats Club, and all other Democratic elected and appointed officials serving the residents of Washington County. Members serve for a four-year term of office corresponding to that of the Executive Committee.

There shall be no limit on the total number of members of the Executive Committee. Any person who is eligible for party office must be elected and take the Oath of Office to become an at-large member of the Committee. All members have full rights and privileges, except ex-officio persons who shall serve in a non-voting, advisory capacity unless and until such time as a person is elected and takes the Oath of Office to become an at-large member of the Committee.

Section 3. Organizational Meeting

After adjournment of the organizational meeting of the County Central Committee, the Chair of the Central Committee shall immediately convene a meeting of the County Executive Committee which shall proceed to elect by a majority vote its Chair, who need not be a member of the Central Committee or the Executive Committee. If the Chair is not a member of either committee, that person shall take the Oath of Office to become an at-large member of the Executive Committee.

The newly elected Chair shall preside over the Executive Committee which shall proceed to elect by a majority vote its other officers, who need not be members of the Central Committee or the Executive Committee. If an officer is not a member of either committee, that person shall take the Oath of Office to become an at-large member of the Executive Committee.

Without objection, the Chair shall appoint the chairs and members of the standing committees and of special committees as needed and may appoint directors of organizational functions as needed, who need not be members of the Central Committee or the Executive Committee. If any of these committee chairs, committee members, or directors is not a member of either the Central Committee or the Executive Committee, that person shall take the Oath of Office to become an at-large member of the Executive Committee.

Section 4. Officers

All officers shall be elected to a four-year term corresponding to that of the Executive Committee. In case of vacancies of officers caused by death, resignation, failure to elect, or removal, the Executive Committee shall fill the vacancy by electing by a majority vote a person who is eligible for party office to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. If that person is not a member of the Central Committee or the Executive Committee, the person shall take the Oath of Office to become an at-large member of the Executive Committee.

The *Chair of the Executive Committee* shall be designated the “*County Chair*” and shall consult and cooperate with the Ohio Democratic Party Executive Committee and its Chairperson on all matters relating to the business of the Ohio Democratic Party within Washington County. The Chair shall have the powers and duties of chief executive officer and shall be subject to the direction of and responsible to the Executive Committee. Without objection, the Chair shall appoint the chairs and members of the standing committees and of special committees as needed, may appoint directors of organizational functions as needed, and may provide for employment of an executive director or any other personnel necessary for the conduct of party affairs. The Chair shall be an ex-officio member of all standing and special committees.

The *Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee* shall be the opposite gender of the Chair. The Vice-Chair shall function as the acting chair in case of the death, resignation, removal, incapacitation, or absence of the chair and shall, in such event, have the same powers, duties, and responsibilities as the chair until such time as the Executive Committee shall properly elect a new chair.

The *Secretary of the Executive Committee* shall be in charge of all of the official documents of the Committee and of preparation of the necessary notices, meeting minutes, and other documents. The Secretary shall preserve such documents and open them for examination at the request of any member of the Committee in accordance with such rules and regulations as the Committee may prescribe.

The *Treasurer of the Executive Committee* shall also serve as acting treasurer of the Central Committee. The Treasurer shall have custody of the funds of the party, shall render up to date financial reports to each meeting of the Executive Committee, and shall submit financial reports to the Board of Elections as required by law. The Treasurer shall be accountable for all receipts and expenditures of the party and be subject to the direction of the Executive Committee. The Treasurer shall make financial reports available to the Budget and Finance Committee upon request. The Treasurer and any other person responsible for the handling of party funds shall be under sufficient bond, the amount to be determined by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

The *Sergeant-at-Arms of the Executive Committee* shall assist with making the arrangements for meetings and preserving order during meetings, as the chair may direct, and shall serve as parliamentarian of the Committee.

Section 5. Standing Committees

Chairs and members of standing committees shall be appointed for an indefinite term and shall serve subject to replacement at the pleasure of the Chair of the Executive Committee.

The *Chair of the Membership and Search Committee* shall lead the identification, qualification, and recruitment of prospective members of the Central and Executive Committees, candidates for public office, and campaign treasurers and support staff.

The *Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee* shall lead the development and implementation of the Budget and Finance Plan which establishes annual party budget and finance goals. This committee shall organize and facilitate efforts to achieve those goals, arrange for the solicitation of all contributions and promotion of all fundraising activities for the party, and raise monies in a manner that is fair, equitable, and uniform throughout the county, taking into consideration the population, Democratic vote, and resources in each sub-division of the county.

The *Chair of the Audit Committee* shall lead the annual audit of treasury accounts, receipts, and expenditures and the financial condition of the party, including a complete statement of income and a complete balance sheet showing all assets, liabilities, and net worth. The Chair shall report results of the audit to the Executive Committee and undertake other audits that the Chair of the Executive Committee, the Chair of the Central Committee, or any member of the Audit Committee may request. The Audit Committee shall comprise the chair plus two additional members of the Executive Committee.

Section 6. Special Committees

Chairs and members of special committees shall be appointed to an indefinite term and shall serve subject to replacement at the pleasure of the Chair of the Executive Committee. Special committees may include a nominations committee, headquarters committee, technology committee, county fair committee, parade committee, and such other committees as may be needed for party activities.

Section 7. Directors

Directors of organizational functions shall be appointed to an indefinite term and shall serve subject to replacement at the pleasure of the Chair of the Executive Committee. Such functions may include communications, community engagement, training and mentoring, youth activities, get-out-the-vote (GOTV), organizational development, or others deemed necessary by the Chair.

Chapter 2 – Meetings of the Executive Committee

Section 1. Regular Meetings

The Executive Committee shall meet immediately after its establishment by the Central Committee and then regularly at least monthly thereafter during the period of its existence or per such other regular schedule as may be approved by a majority vote of the members at a regular meeting.

Section 2. Special Meetings

The Executive Committee may be called to meet by the Chair or Vice-Chair in case of the death, resignation, incapacitation, removal, or absence of the chair or if there is no such officer or if both such officers are absent, then by any other officer of the Committee.

Section 3. Minutes of Meetings

Minutes shall be taken of each meeting of the Executive Committee and approved by a majority vote of the members, present and voting, at any meeting of the Committee. Minutes shall include a summary of the Treasurer's report provided at the meeting and a record of each Oath of Office taken, the date it was taken, and who administered it.

Section 4. Notice of Meetings

Notice of any meeting other than the organizational meeting of the Executive Committee, giving the place and time and the purpose of the meeting, shall be sent by phone, text, electronic mail, or other electronic means to all members of the committee at least five days in advance of the meeting. Committee members shall keep the Secretary informed about their preferred method of notice in order to assure receipt of the notice.

Section 5. Cancellation of Meetings

A regular meeting or a special meeting shall be automatically cancelled when the Washington County Sheriff's Office issues a Level II Emergency and rescheduled with notice per Section 4.

Section 6. Quorum for Meetings

The quorum for a regular meeting or a special meeting of the Executive Committee shall be fifteen (15) members, provided that at least four (4) of them are officers, chairs of standing committees, or directors of organizational functions of the Committee.

Section 7. Public Participation and Access to Records

All meetings of Executive Committee shall be open to the public. The time and place of the meetings should be publicized in a manner to assure timely notice to all interested persons. At the sole discretion of the chair of the meeting, individual members of the public who are not members of the Committee may be permitted to speak for a reasonable amount of time, also at the sole discretion of the chair. The Committee is required to provide to any person who asks for it a copy of their current governing documents, a copy of meeting minutes for the past 12 months, and a roster of current committee members, to include name and address only and whether that person represents a precinct or is an at-large member. No other records, other than those readily available at the county board of elections, are required to be provided.

Section 8. Standing Rules and Robert's Rules of Order

All meetings of the Executive Committee shall be conducted according to, first, this Constitution and Bylaws; second, operational procedures in Standing Rules that may be adopted or revised at any time by a majority vote of the members, present and voting, at a meeting of the Committee; and last, the procedures in a current edition of Robert's Rules of Order. Voting by secret ballot, unit rule, proxy, or slate is prohibited.

Chapter 3 – Duties and Responsibilities of Members

All members of the Executive Committee shall have the duties and responsibility to: (a) represent the Democratic Party in a positive manner; (b) nominate Poll Workers for the Board of Elections within the member's Precinct; (c) nominate persons to fill vacancies on the Central Committee; (d) nominate candidates for election or appointment to public offices; (e) recommend amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws; (f) support the party officers, chairs of standing and special committees, and directors of organizational functions; (g) identify Ds, Rs, and Independents in the county for updating party voter records; (h) encourage the "good guys" to volunteer and vote; (i) encourage and support likely Ds to register and vote; (j) support party communications and community engagement; (k) participate in party training and mentoring opportunities; (l) work to build and sustain a robust volunteer organization at all levels of the party; and (m) assist with the Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) tasks within the member's Precinct during a political campaign. Such tasks may include but are not limited to assisting with yard signs, literature drops, door-to-door canvass, telephone campaigning, registering voters, helping disabled voters to vote, taking voters to the polling place, and assisting in raising of campaign funds.

Chapter 4 – Pre-Primary Endorsements

Section 1. Aid and Assistance to State Party-Endorsed Nominees

In an election year in which the Ohio State Democratic Executive Committee makes pre-primary endorsements the Washington County Democratic Party shall use all of its resources and leadership to aid and assist in the election of such nominees for the benefit of the Ohio Democratic Party.

Section 2. Local and District Pre-Primary Endorsements

At any time, the Washington County Executive Committee may make pre-primary endorsements for any local or district office providing that sixty percent (60%) of the members of the Committee, present and voting on such questions, so determine. At any meeting on which endorsement shall be discussed, ample advance notice of the possibility of a pre-primary endorsement shall be given to each member of the Committee.

Section 3. Right of Appearance

Every Democrat who desires to be a Democratic candidate for any public office shall have the right to appear before the Washington County Executive Committee if said office is decided in a statewide, district, county, city, ward, village, township, or other jurisdictional election. Such appearance shall be scheduled during a regular meeting, or at a special meeting called to discuss the campaign issues, his or her candidacy, and any endorsements to be made by the Committee.

Section 4. Donation Limitations

No Democratic candidate shall be required to contribute, lend, give, or donate anything of value to any Democratic committee or party official as a condition of endorsement for any elective or appointive public office. No member, candidate, party official, or Democratic elected or appointed official, acting for himself or herself individually, or for any Democratic Committee, shall request or receive any financial contribution, donation, gift, or other form of economic remuneration as a condition for securing an endorsement of any Democratic candidate for elective or appointive office.

Chapter 5 – Party Unity

All members of the party, candidates for office, party officers, party committees and organizations, and elected Democratic officials shall support the principles of the Ohio Democratic Party.

Chapter 6 – Violation of this Constitution or Bylaws

Section 1. Censure

Willful and intentional conduct by any party official or party organization in violation of the Constitution or Bylaws of the Washington County Democratic Party shall be cause for censure and such other sanctions as may be adopted by the County Executive Committee.

Section 2. Examiners

The Chair of the Executive Committee shall nominate three Democrats to act as examiners of any violations of this Constitution and Bylaws. The Executive Committee shall confirm or reject the nominations within thirty (30) days of the first meeting of the Committee. The primary duty of the Examiners is to investigate any violations of the Constitution or Bylaws referred to them by means of a complaint or by a majority vote of the Committee. The term of the Examiners shall be for the duration of the Committee which confirmed it. The expiration of this term of office shall not affect the validity of any report submitted.

Section 3. Complaint

A complaint in writing, specifying violations of any provision of the Constitution and Bylaws by any person or group may be presented to the Chair of the Executive Committee. Such complaint must contain the valid signatures of at least one percent (1%) of the Democrats who voted in the last primary, or 50 valid signatures, whichever is less, of the Democrats affected or within the jurisdiction of the person or group complained against. The Chair shall then designate one of the examiners to investigate any such complaint within thirty (30) days after its receipt by the Chair. The examiner shall investigate the complaint as thoroughly as possible and shall provide for a fair hearing to all parties. All parties shall be permitted to present briefs, evidence, and witnesses. The examiner shall attempt to mediate the complaint to the satisfaction of all parties.

Section 4. Report and Decision

The examiner must submit a report in writing on the results of the investigation, within sixty (60) days of the receipt of the original complaint, to the Chair of the Executive Committee and the parties. If the examiner concludes that he is unable to mediate the conflict to the satisfaction of all parties, the Executive Committee shall then, after opportunity for full consideration, including a fair hearing, decide the issues raised by the complaint. A majority of said members of the Executive Committee at a properly constituted meeting shall decide the issue or issues. Such meeting of the Executive Committee must take place within ninety (90) days after receipt of the examiner's report. The decision of the Executive Committee shall be final and binding upon all parties to the dispute.

Chapter 7 – Removal from Office

Section 1. Termination of Party Membership and Office

If any member becomes no longer eligible for party office, the party membership of that person shall end automatically.

Section 2. Replacement of Officers

An officer may be replaced by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

Section 3. Replacement of Chairs and Members of Standing and Special Committees

Committee chairs and members appointed by the Chair shall serve at the pleasure of the Chair.

Section 4. Replacement of Directors of Organizational Functions

Directors appointed by the Chair shall serve at the pleasure of the Chair.