

“Act Like an Independent Party”

Amendment to the NEC Priority Resolution

June 21, 2023

Written by Neal Meyer (NYC) and Alex Pellitteri (NYC)

Considering that...

The Democratic Socialists of America wants to build a party-like organization (a “proto-party” or “surrogate party”) that unites all our candidates around a single strategy and platform. We also want to build a base of people who believe in our project, identify with it, and fight for it...

DSA wants to be independent of the Democratic and Republican Parties and present a third alternative to both major parties. This is the key to defeating the far right and beating the neoliberal Democratic Party...

It is not advisable for us to form an independent political party with its own ballot line at this moment. But there are intermediate steps we can take to assert our independence from the politics of the Democratic Party leadership and build a party-like structure...

Political independence comes in at least three forms: organizational independence, strategic independence, and having an independent identity...

By organizational independence we mean having our own infrastructure, including our own membership and volunteer lists, our own fundraising capacity, controlling our own voter lists, building our own candidate schools, etc...

By strategic independence we mean having our own policy priorities, as well as expectations for our candidates to cross-endorse each other, caucus separately from the Democratic Party in legislatures, and bloc vote...

By having an independent identity we mean building and emphasizing the collective identity of our candidates and expecting our candidates to identify publicly and proudly as “democratic socialists.” Left-wing parties (and parties of other ideological traditions) almost everywhere else in the world run under a single collective identity to increase people’s identification with their collective project (see, for example, [MORENA](#) in Mexico, [Die Linke](#) in Germany, the [Partido dos Trabalhadores](#) and the [Partido Socialismo e Liberdade](#) in Brazil)...

DSA's electoral work is at different stages of development across the U.S. so it would be a mistake to insist on a one-size-fits-all approach in every case, and in some cases there are opportunities to build larger left-wing coalitions and/or to support strong labor organizers and other activists who do not want to be part of a party-like project as we envision here. Nevertheless, the National Electoral Commission should try to develop programs and strategies that help DSA move towards becoming an independent party-like organization, and this means creating a national standard that chapters can diverge from when and where appropriate...

Be it resolved that...

In the National Electoral Commission's Priority Resolution, the following changes are made (**additions in green and bold**, ~~deletions in red and crossed out~~).

After the second whereas clause, a new whereas clause is added:

WHEREAS the key to defeating the far right and beating the Democratic Party lies in presenting a third, democratic socialist alternative for working-class people that is organizationally, strategically, and visibly independent of the Democratic Party; and

In the fourth resolved clause, the following changes are made:

RESOLVED, that DSA, through the NEC, will develop programs and strategies to strengthen our already existing organizational ~~establish operational~~ independence from the Democratic Party, including building our own lists of voters and volunteers, our independent fundraising capacity, our own candidate schools, and exploring building our own tech tools; and

After the fourth resolved clause, the following two resolved clauses are added:

RESOLVED, that DSA, through the NEC, will develop programs and strategies to establish strategic independence from the Democratic Party, including developing our own legislative programs, organizing separately from the Democratic Party in legislatures in Socialists in Office committees (as is already happening in some places across the country), expecting our candidates to endorse other DSA candidates, and bloc voting; and

RESOLVED, that DSA, through the NEC, will develop programs and strategies to, wherever possible, establish an independent identity from the Democratic Party in

the public consciousness. This includes running our candidates explicitly and proudly as “democratic socialists” and developing our own “party identity” and common messaging. A common identity will unite all our candidates across the country and will emphasize the existence of DSA as an independent political project from the Democratic and Republican Parties that working-class people can identify with and think of as an alternative to the two parties; and