

Proposal for Endorsement Process for 2018 Electoral Cycle

Background context for the proposal

Members of the Local Council were approached by members of the Richmond Progressive Alliance about an EBDSA endorsement for two of their members: current Richmond City Councilmember Jovanka Beckles (running for CA State Assembly, District 15), and former Richmond Mayor and Councilmember Gayle McLaughlin (running for CA Lieutenant Governor)

At the 7/9 Local Council meeting, we authorized members of the Council to continue further conversations with the RPA of a purely informational nature. Since then, members of EBDSA have met with RPA and have gotten further clarification on the nature of their campaigns and candidates.

The situation produced by RPA approaching EBDSA has put us in a somewhat unique position, given that an already-active campaign has approached us for an early endorsement. We have not been approached by any other campaigns, much less any with an active electoral apparatus, and an early endorsement would potentially allow EBDSA to have greater impact on the content of the RPA campaigns, if the membership chooses to endorse either or both. For these reasons, we would like to begin the planning for a democratic decision-making process around these specific endorsements now, and have it occur as soon as feasible.

The submitters of this proposal would like to initiate, as quickly as possible, a multi-step process for having member debate and then vote on whether and/or how EBDSA might want to endorse the RPA campaigns.

The first of these meetings would take place sometime in September and would be an Informational Meeting under our bylaws (meaning no official business can be decided), to share information with members and offer space to debate the merits of this particular endorsement, as well as broader debates over electoral strategy. It would be ideal if the candidates, particularly Jovanka Beckles, could attend a section of this meeting to introduce themselves and answer questions.

The second of these meetings would take place some time in October or early November, and would be a Special Meeting used to determine if EBDSA will endorse either or both of the RPA candidates and what our strategy should be if we choose to endorse (as per Article II, Section 6 of our Bylaws on Electoral Endorsements).

Proposal

Whereas, the 2018 election cycle is approaching, and EBDSA needs to have a democratic process by which to decide strategy, priorities, and potential endorsements

Whereas, we have been approached by members of the Richmond Progressive Alliance about potential early endorsements of Jovanka Beckles (running for CA State Assembly, District 15) and/or Gayle McLaughlin (running for CA Lieutenant Governor)

Whereas, we require broad and democratic membership engagement in determining our electoral strategy and priorities for the 2018 cycle and beyond

Be it resolved, the Local Council creates an Endorsement Process Working Group, which must consist of, at minimum, one Internal and one External Organizer, as well as appointed Organizers and rank-and-file members

Be it resolved, the Endorsement Process Working Group will be led by a Steering Committee, consisting at minimum of all appointed and elected Organizers in the WG

Be it resolved, the LC directs the EPWG to carry out planning and execution for the membership endorsement decision process for Jovanka Beckles and Gayle McLaughlin. This will consist of, at minimum, one Informational Meeting in September/October and one Special Meeting in October/early November.

Be it resolved, endorsements are valid through one election cycle, including primaries and run-offs. For instance: If EBDSA endorses a candidate for a primary election and that candidate places in the runoff to a general election, the endorsement shall carry through the general election unless otherwise determined. A previous endorsee's re-election campaign would need to be endorsed via the normal process before EBDSA officially backs their re-election bid.