

**Democrats Abroad Canada
Toronto Chapter
Annual General Meeting Minutes**

29 March 2025

**Meeting by Zoom & In Person at the Centre for Social Innovation - Spadina
Toronto, Ontario**

*Note: actions for follow up are in **green text***

*Person volunteering or assigned action are in **red text***

Attendance in person: Colleen Mahaffie, Julie Buchanan, Ed Ungar, Allenna Leonard, Lee Strickland, Danielle Stampley, Steve Weisman, Lucia Lloyd, Jacqueline Swartz, Richard Weisman, Lura Bechtel, John Garofano, Alisa Whitfield, Dana Osborne, Steven Luu

Attendance online: Sarah Jane Growe, Susan Harris, April, J. David Markham, Linda W., Mari Rutka, Maya Stevens-Unisky, Melanie Harsch, Starla Goggins, Jeff Archambeault

Meeting called to order at 3:50pm by Lee.

Approval of the Agenda: Verbal approvals in favour. Agenda moved.

Minutes and Business Arising from the 2024 AGM: Verbal approvals in favour. Minutes moved.

2024 Report from the Chair:

As outgoing Chair, I wish to thank the Board of Directors for their continuing efforts to support the mission of Democrats Abroad Toronto. I wish also to thank the general members who volunteered their time over the past year to support the Harris election campaign via street trawling, phone banking, and DATO social events.

We have had a busy year. Democrats Abroad Toronto organized many events to support the 2024 Presidential Election Campaign for Kamala Harris, including:

- January
 - International Voter Registration Day
- February
 - Superbowl Party
- March
 - Global Presidential Primary
 - Pub Night: State of the Union Address
- April
 - Presentation by Ken Martin, current DNC Chair
- June
 - Presidential Debate Watch (Biden)
 - Pride Booth
- July

- 4th of July Pop-up Event
- Pub Night: Phone Banking
- August
 - Pub Night: DNC Convention Watch
- September
 - Presidential Debate Watch (Harris)
 - Roncesvalles Street Fair Booth
 - National Voter Registration Day
 - Word on the Street Trawling
- October
 - Pub Night: Social
- November
 - US Presidential Election Watch
 - Thanksgiving Dinner
- December
 - Chapter Board Meeting/Holiday Gathering
- February
 - Superbowl Party

In addition, we held many Street Trawling events at Market Square, Kensington Market and other locations to get out the vote. Although we were not successful in the campaign, the enthusiasm was remarkable.

However, I am not sure how you feel, the election results left me flummoxed.

In the 2020 United States presidential election, Democratic nominee Joe Biden received approximately 81.27 million votes (51.31% of the popular vote), while Republican incumbent Donald Trump garnered about 72.22 million votes (46.86%). Biden secured 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232.

In the 2024 election, Republican nominee Donald Trump won approximately 77.30 million votes (49.80% of the popular vote), and Democratic nominee Kamala Harris received about 75.02 million votes (48.32%). Trump secured 312 electoral votes to Harris's 226.

These results indicate a shift from 2020 to 2024, with Trump increasing his vote count by approximately 3.08 million and winning the popular vote in 2024. Conversely, the Democratic nominee's vote count decreased by about 6.25 million over the same period.

How did this happen? During the Harris early campaign, the motto was "When we fight, we win". We did fight, but we did not win.

Later in the campaign, the motto changed to "When we vote, we win". Well, we did not vote in the 2024 election as we did in the 2020 election, and we lost. I believe if we did vote in 2024 as we did in 2020, we would have won. Now we are facing an existential threat to our democracy that will detrimentally change the USA for years to come.

I am reading many reasons why the Democrats did not vote:

1. Economic Concerns and Inflation
2. Association with an Unpopular Administration
3. Campaign Strategy Missteps
4. Failure to Address Key Voter Concerns
5. Demographic Shifts
6. Campaign Management Issues
7. Late Entry into the Race
8. Underestimating Opponent's Appeal
9. Global Anti-Incumbent Sentiment
10. Failure to Galvanize Traditional Democratic Base

No matter what reasons we identify, the bottom line is Democrats failed to vote, and there is no excuse for not voting. In 2020, absentee ballots carried the states of Arizona and Georgia for Joe Biden. That is a case for voting as every vote counts.

There is hope. Democrats in Pennsylvania just won two seats in a special election, taking a Republican seat in a district that the orange menace won by 15 points and maintaining control of the PA House.

Soon there will be a special election in Florida which, if Democrats win, may regain control of the US House for the Democrats.

There is a change in DNC Leadership with Ken Martin which I believe will re-invent the Democratic Party.

As I said last year, we have a choice as Americans: to preserve our heritage of moral values and democracy controlled by the people, or to live under an immoral autocracy controlled by a narcissist. The choice is clear; the challenge is simple: get out the vote.

As Democrats, we value Respect over Hate, Compassion over Greed, and Truth over Lies.

Thank you,

Lee Strickland, Chair

Treasurer's Report:

[The Treasurer's Report can be found here.](#)

- Notes from the Treasurer:
 - We have several different accounts which hold CAD and USD funds.
 - There are a number of discrepancies that the Treasurer is working to resolve, due to delayed reporting from the Global board and a mid-term transfer of duties.

Steve moves to approve, second by Reg. Verbal approval. Treasurer's Report approved.

Election Results

- This year, we are electing:
 - Chair
 - Co-Vice Chair (2)
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Member at Large (8)
- A call for candidates went out in January. Candidate statements were due by the end of February. They were posted on the DATO website in March. Ballots went out in March and were submitted electronically.
- Thanks to the NEC (Lee Strickland, Janette McCabe, Ed Ungar, and Jacqueline Swartz) for your work putting this election together!

Election results:

- Chair: Julie Buchanan (acclaimed)
- Treasurer: Alonzo Jones (acclaimed)
- Peel Member-at-Large: Joseph Hopkins (acclaimed)
- Durham Member-at-Large: Lucia Lloyd (acclaimed)
- York Member-at-Large: Brooke Scott (acclaimed)
- Co-Vice Chair: Colleen Mahaffie-Nixon
- Co-Vice Chair: Steve Weisman
- Secretary: Danielle Stampley
- Members at Large:
 - Mari Rutka
 - Diana Conconi
 - Maya Stevens-Uninsky
 - Virginia Smith
 - Joann Sochor

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Next meeting – Tuesday, April 8, 2025, 7pm.

Minutes submitted by Colleen Mahaffie