

THE BYLAWS

of THE HIGH SCHOOL
DEMOCRATS *of*
AMERICA



HIGH SCHOOL DEMOCRATS *of* AMERICA

As Amended by
the Executive Board, Adult Advisory Board, & National Committee
July 7, 2024

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Notes from Luke Netto, 2023-2024 National Chief of Staff:

To cite these Bylaws in formal documents including written motions, papers, votes, or otherwise, format the citation as follows: e.g. “Section 830(c)”, or “VIII Bylaws § 830(c)”. Contextually, clarify that the section referenced is from these Bylaws and not other legislation or resolutions. Where possible, especially in lengthy documents, include the exact quotation from these Bylaws as a footnote.

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ARTICLE I

NAME

SECTION 110. NAME.

This organization shall be known as High School Democrats of America and may be shortened to the abbreviated HSDA.

ARTICLE II

POLICY

SECTION 210. ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONS.

This organization shall be required to function with the following guidelines and restrictions:

- a) The High School Democrats of America shall engage our fellow students to be active in the Democratic Party and the American political system as a whole.
- b) The High School Democrats of America shall actively support Democratic nominees in local, state, and national elections and shall conduct an active campaign in support of Democratic nominees.
- c) The High School Democrats of America, its state chapters, its local chapters, and its caucuses shall be forbidden from endorsing any candidate for office which has yet to win the respective primary election or any candidate who is not running as a Democratic nominee, except in non-partisan races or Presidential races in which an incumbent has been endorsed by the Democratic National Committee. In a general election with more than one Democratic candidate, endorsements of any of the Democratic candidates shall be allowed.
- d) The High School Democrats shall make its principal mission the identification, training, and recruiting of Democratic activists in High School, and the insertion of Democratic messaging into high school.
- e) The High School Democrats shall remain committed to upholding justice and equity for all persons in all internal and external work. Internal bodies may expand on this concept by developing specific Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) mission statements.

ARTICLE III

ORGANIZATION

SECTION 310. NATIONAL ORGANIZATION.

The High School Democrats of America shall be composed of the National Committee, the Executive Board, Caucuses, the Ethics Council, and an Adult Advisory Board.

SECTION 320. STATE ORGANIZATIONS.

The High School Democrats of America shall organize its membership into state and territorial units which will serve to perform the purpose of this organization in their respective jurisdictions.

SECTION 330. LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS.

State units of this organization shall be composed of local chapters, which shall be subject to all pertaining requirements of this document. Local chapters may also be formed in states without organized units under this organization.

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ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 410. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP.

Any Democrat in a United States' High School or any Democrat, being a high school student or home schooled, shall be eligible for active membership in this organization. Persons eligible shall remain eligible until two (2) months after their scheduled graduation from high school. State units shall be allowed to apply further requirements to membership as deemed just and necessary.

SECTION 415. SPECIAL DUES.

General membership must be maintained without dues at all times.

SECTION 420. MEMBERSHIP.

All members of the High School Democrats of America shall be given the following rights for the duration of their membership:

- a) All members will be allowed to vote in fair and open elections for national offices as long as they have been members for at least two (2) months.
- b) All members will be allowed to vote in fair and open elections for state offices as long as they have been members for at least one (1) month. States may choose to enact more stringent requirements in their state elections.
- c) No membership test or oath shall be given to members by any part of this organization, except that they must declare support for the Democratic Party
- d) Members will not be subject to discrimination based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, national origin, economic status, or physical disability.
- e) All members shall have the opportunity to run for any national office within the High School Democrats of America provided that they will be members for the duration of the term they seek, and that they have secured the support of no less than (2) members of the National Committee, excluding members of the sitting Executive Board.
- f) Unless otherwise determined by the Ethics Council, members shall have the right to seek or hold office at any level of the organization.

SECTION 430. DATA PRIVACY.

All data collected by the High School Democrats of America, its state chapters, its local chapters, or its caucuses, regarding its membership will be subject to the following requirements:

- a) Data can only be used for official HSDA purposes and must not be shared with external organizations or individuals without explicit permission from the member(s) from whom it is derived.
- b) Any personal information submitted by a member of HSDA must not be displayed on any public HSDA mediums unless the member has consented to this display and has been given the option to opt out; this provision does not apply to the names of state, national, or caucus leadership or the means of communication provided by HSDA to this leadership, which can be displayed publicly at the discretion of HSDA leaders at the respective levels.
- c) HSDA data cannot be used for personal purposes, including, but not limited to, campaigning for HSDA leadership positions or promoting a cause that is not official HSDA policy.

Accidental leakages of HSDA membership data cannot be exploited by any members of HSDA for purposes that violate the above guidelines. Any HSDA member found to have violated the above restrictions will be subject to disciplinary action, including impeachment. Complaints about violations of this clause shall be investigated by the Ethics Council detailed in Article X, which shall determine the appropriate punishment.

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SECTION 440. REMOVAL OF A MEMBER.

General membership of an individual can be revoked by a unanimous vote of the Ethics Council detailed in Article X, along with three-fourths (3/4) of the Adult Advisory Board, at any time for reasons including, but not limited to: racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, homophobia, any acts of intolerance, bullying, financial malfeasance, sexual harassment, or repeated violations of state or national bylaws. Upon removal, the member will be immediately stripped of any local, state, or national leadership positions.

Following a notification about possible removal, the member under scrutiny must be given at least three (3), but no more than five (5) days, notice of a hearing at which their status will be evaluated. If a member is removed, the following procedure must be followed:

- a) The perpetrator must have a listening session with the people affected by their wrongdoing.
- b) Following the listening session, the perpetrator must submit a formal apology to all individuals involved, of a length determined individually by those who were wronged.
- c) The perpetrator must commit to a set of actions to increase understanding of their wrongdoing, as determined through consultation with those who were wronged.

Those affected shall have a right to choose a proxy for any or all parts of the process if they wish; this proxy may be a member of the Adult Advisory Board, but must be chosen by the affected individual.

ARTICLE V

STATES

SECTION 510. STATE UNIT CHARTERING.

State units may be chartered by a five-sixths (5/6) vote of the Executive Board if they meet the following requirements:

- a) A state must have at least one (1) or more local chapters to be chartered as a state unit and at least ten (10) total members.
 - i) State units may be constituted of only virtual chapters, with the intention that the state will gain more physical chapters and engage in in-person organizing.
- b) A state must be in existence in interim status for at least six (6) months before it can be chartered by the Executive Board.
- c) State units must have state leadership elected by its membership within six (6) months of receiving a charter. Before receiving a charter, the first person from the state whom the Executive Board designates as having completed the chartering process will be the leader of their state unit.
- d) State units not meeting the requirements above shall be deemed interim chapters.

SECTION 520. NATIONAL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION AND INCORPORATION.

State units shall have the following privileges within this organization:

- a) Chartered state units shall have two (2) seats on the National Committee, one of which is reserved for a state leader or appointed designate.
- b) Interim state chapters shall be granted one (1) seat on the National Committee, reserved for the state leader designated in Section 510(c). The seat will be revoked if the interim chapter has not been chartered after the six (6) month period outlined in Section 510(b).
- c) Members of interim and chartered state units who meet the membership requirements of this document shall be members of this organization and be afforded the rights and privileges of the same.

SECTION 530. STATE UNIT REQUIREMENTS.

The following requirements shall apply to all registered state units, chartered or interim:

- a) State units shall be required to adopt bylaws that are completely compatible with this document.

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- b) State units shall maintain close contact within our organization as is necessary to further the mission and goals of this organization, and to ensure optimal efficiency and productivity.
- c) State units shall endeavor to maintain contact with their state Democratic Parties and will be subject to the oversight of Party officials.
- d) State units as a whole shall be barred from endorsing or promoting any candidate for HSDA offices.

SECTION 540. CHARTER REVOCATION.

State units that are not in compliance with this document or are shown to be violating the principles of this organization may have their charters revoked by a five-sixths (5/6) vote of the Executive Board. Upon charter revocation, the state units' representation on the National Committee will be expelled unless the Executive Board decides to maintain the state chapter in interim status. Members of states that have lost their charter will remain members of the High School Democrats of America.

Any Regional Director may file an inactivity complaint with the Executive Board due to lack of attendance at National Committee or Regional meetings, lack of state-level programming, or a lack of communication with members and the national organization. Within two weeks of filing an inactivity complaint, the Executive Board must consider whether to revoke the charter of the state.

The Vice Chairs and Regional Directors shall endeavor to keep an active record of which states are chartered, interim, not chartered, and which states have had their charters revoked.

SECTION 550. OVERSIGHT OF STATES.

Any members of a state chapter, the Executive Board, or the Adult Advisory Board may submit a complaint to the High School Democrats of America about inactivity amongst any members of the state leadership or about actions that conflict with the HSDA Bylaws or the respective state bylaws. This process may not be used for personal reasons or for purposes of intimidation. The Ethics Council will investigate these complaints and will take action deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, placing the state leader(s) in question under probation or removing the state leader(s).

SECTION 560. STATE ELECTIONS.

- a) State elections shall take place no earlier than March 1 and no later than June 31 in a manner prescribed by individual state bylaws. Newly elected leaders must assume office within one month of the election.
 - i) Candidates for state elections who are in the process of campaigning may not simultaneously campaign for HSDA national offices. At no point should an elected state leader serve simultaneously as an elected HSDA officer.
 - ii) At minimum, the state unit Chair and Vice Chair should be elected democratically. Individual states may prescribe for more elected positions.
 - iii) The person(s) managing elections in every state must inform the Development Director of their plans for state elections including:
 - A) elections and campaigning rules
 - B) methods of election (i.e. first past the post, ranked choice, STAR method)
 - C) timeline for candidacy, campaigning, and election
 - iv) The Development Director must make exceptions to Section 560(a) for states that have compelling special circumstances including, but not limited to, interim status or state party rules.
- b) Individuals seeking election to state leadership positions shall be barred from receiving endorsements from individuals who do not belong to that state chapter or non-members of HSDA (including elected officials). Candidates for state leadership will also be barred from joining with other candidates in a slate.
- c) The Development Director of the High School Democrats of America shall have the authority to supervise, coordinate, or administer any state elections at their discretion unless otherwise directed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Executive Board.
- d) Within two (2) weeks of the election results being announced, an officer of the state unit must contact the Executive Board and inform them of the results and of the official National Committee representation being sent by the state unit for the next term.

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ARTICLE VI LOCAL CHAPTERS

SECTION 610. CHARTERING REQUIREMENTS.

In order for a chapter to be chartered with the High School Democrats of America, it must have three (3) members and leadership. The chapter must have a roster of active members, which shall include the following:

- a) Names of members.
- b) Contact Information for each member.
- c) Birthdates and years of graduation.

SECTION 620. CHAPTER TYPES.

Chapters may be chartered as either high school chapters centered at a school, community chapters centered within a community or locality, or county chapters centered within a county. Virtual chapters may be established in situations where individuals are unable to participate in a physical chapter. Virtual chapters will be given the same designation as any other local chapter.

SECTION 630. CHAPTER REQUIREMENTS.

The following regulations apply to all local chapters:

- a) Registered chapters must maintain close contact within this organization as is necessary to further the mission and goals of this organization, and to ensure optimal efficiency and productivity.
- b) Chapter leaders shall register their chapter with this organization on an annual basis.
- c) Registered chapters shall be required to follow the requirements of their state high school Democrats chapter and this organization.
- d) Registered chapters shall be required to guarantee all rights owed to their members by this document and their respective state chapter bylaws.

SECTION 635. CHARTER REVOCATION.

Any chapter not in compliance with this document or shown to be violating the principles of this organization may have its chapter charter revoked by a five-sixths (5/6) vote of the Executive Board. Chapters whose charters have been revoked shall not be allowed to reform with similar organization a new chapter, unless accompanied by a five-sixths (5/6) vote of the Executive Board.

SECTION 640. CHAPTER PRIVILEGES.

Local chapters that have been chartered shall have the privilege of participating in both their respective state unit, and the High School Democrats of America. All members of registered local chapters shall be considered members of this organization.

ARTICLE VII EXECUTIVE BOARD

SECTION 710. ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

The Executive Board shall see to the functioning and growth of this organization and its programs, and shall endeavor to make this organization an instrument for positive change in communities around the country.

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SECTION 720. COMPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

The Executive Board of the High School Democrats of America shall be composed of the following offices: National Chair, two (2) Vice Chairs of different genders, Programs Director, Communications Director, and Development Director.

SECTION 730. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

The Executive Board shall have the following responsibilities and duties:

- a) The National Chair shall serve as the Chief Executive of the High School Democrats of America, set the agenda and chair all meetings of the Executive Board, and serve as the official voice of this organization. The National Chair must also execute and obey all rules and resolutions adopted by this organization.
- b) The Vice Chairs shall fulfill all duties of the National Chair in the absence of the officeholder, manage the staff of this organization, chair the National Committee, and serve as the primary contacts for organizational expansion. The Vice Chairs shall serve as ex-officio members of any committees established to pursue organizational operations and of any task forces established in furtherance of specific legislative action, as sanctioned by the Executive Board.
- c) The Programs Director shall plan all national events for this organization, and set up various other events as necessary for organizational success.
- d) The Communications Director shall serve to broadcast the message of this organization to a wider community and ensure proper publicity for all major organizational events.
- e) The Development Director shall ensure the long-term management of HSDA's records, data, growth, disputes, and election process. The Development Director shall oversee Associations, as defined in Section 980, to ensure that they have the resources necessary to accomplish their objectives while adhering to the protocols in this document.
- f) The Executive Board may veto any normal resolution passed by the National Committee by a simple majority vote.
- g) The Executive Board and any appointed members of a National Staff must meet monthly with representatives of the Adult Advisory Board to provide a report on the state of the High School Democrats of America.
- h) The Executive Board must provide written updates about HSDA, at least once every two (2) weeks, to representatives of the Adult Advisory Board.
- i) The Executive Board must provide a written report to all HSDA members, at least once every two (2) months, summarizing the work that the Executive Board and any appointed members of a National Staff have completed since the last report. This report must be accompanied by meeting minutes of all meetings involving the Executive Board or National Staff. Gaps in the minutes shall be permitted for executive sessions; if a gap exists due to an executive session, a clear rationale must be provided, certified unanimously by the Executive Board.
- j) The Executive Board shall hold a joint meeting with all caucus leaders, the Diversity Director, and any representatives sent by the Adult Advisory Board at least once a month to discuss the state of the High School Democrats of America.
- k) Every member of the Executive Board shall be responsible for ensuring that HSDA activities are inclusive, meet ADA requirements, and are reflective of the diversity of its membership by maintaining close contact with the Diversity Director.
- l) Every member of the Executive Board shall be responsible for ensuring that state and local chapters have the necessary resources to expand.

SECTION 740. IMPEACHMENT CAUSE.

Officers of the Executive Board are subject to impeachment and removal from office for failure to fulfill assigned duties or for violation of any law or rule of this organization, the Democratic Party, or for the commission of high crimes and misdemeanors.

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SECTION 745. IMPEACHMENT PROCESS.

- a) The National Chair shall preside at the removal of any member of the Executive Board, except in the case of a motion to remove the National Chair, in which case the Vice Chair of a different gender than the National Chair shall preside.
- i) In the event that there is a motion to remove the National Chair and both Vice Chairs are a different gender than the National Chair, the older Vice Chair shall preside; if both Vice Chairs are the same age, a Vice Chair shall be randomly assigned to preside.
- b) A motion to remove any member of the Executive Board must be submitted in writing to the National Chair by a member of the Executive Board, the National Committee, or the Adult Advisory Board. The motion must be co-signed by two (2) other members of the Executive Board, the National Committee, or the Adult Advisory Board.
- c) An open hearing must be conducted, with representatives of the Adult Advisory Board present, at least three (3) days but not more than seven (7) days from the filing of the motion to hear evidence of the impeachment and the defense of the accused.
- d) The presiding officer shall then schedule a vote of the National Committee within seven (7) days of the hearing. At least three (3) days notice of the vote shall be given and a two-thirds (2/3) quorum of the National Committee is required for the vote to occur. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the National Committee is required to remove the member.
- i) In the event that the National Committee fails to reach the necessary quorum to hold a vote to remove the accused within seven (7) days of the hearing, the Adult Advisory Board may vote to remove the accused member; a two-thirds (2/3) quorum of the Adult Advisory Board is required for this vote to occur. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Adult Advisory Board is required to remove the member.

SECTION 750. VACANCIES.

In the event of a death, resignation, or removal from office of any Executive Board Member, the National Chair shall nominate an individual for the position. If the office of National Chair is vacant, the line of succession specified in Section 755 shall be followed. A vote shall be scheduled for the National Committee and its membership shall be notified ten (10) days prior to the vote. A quorum of three-fifths (3/5) shall be required, and a simple majority shall be required to confirm the nominee. The confirmed nominee shall take office immediately unless specified differently. If the National Committee does not confirm a replacement within thirty (30) days the National Chair may appoint an office holder to complete the current term.

SECTION 755. LINE OF SUCCESSION.

The Line of Succession shall be as follows in the case of a vacancy in the office of National Chair:

- a) The Vice Chair of a different gender than the National Chair
- b) The Vice Chair of the same gender as the National Chair
- c) Programs Director
- d) Communications Director
- e) Development Director

In the event that both Vice Chairs are of a different gender than the National Chair, the older Vice Chair shall be first in the line of succession. If the Vice Chairs share the same age, the Vice Chair who will assume the office of National Chair shall be determined at random.

The individual who succeeds to the office of National Chair shall serve out the remainder of the term as Chair, while the office that they vacate shall be filled pursuant to Section 750.

SECTION 760. EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS.

Executive Board meetings shall be held once a week, at a time and in a manner specified by the National Chair. The National Chair may call special meetings for any reason. All Executive Board Members must be notified of operational meetings three (3) days prior to the meeting, except under extraordinary circumstances. Members must be present at three-fourths (3/4) of the monthly meetings. Representatives of the Adult Advisory Board must be notified of non-emergency Executive Board meetings three (3) days prior to the meeting and will have the right to

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attend as non-voting participants. The Diversity Director must be notified of non-emergency Executive Board meetings three (3) days prior to the meeting and will have the right to attend as a non-voting participant, except under special circumstances detailed in Section 765. Minutes shall be taken at all meetings of the Executive Board and shall be accessible to all members of the High School Democrats of America.

SECTION 765. RULES OF VOTING.

Each member of the Executive Board shall be entitled to one vote on any matter. The National Chair shall preside over all votes unless otherwise specified in this document, and votes shall be conducted through a conference call voting system unless otherwise directed by the National Chair. The National Chair shall have the ability to vote on all matters being discussed in the meeting. For all matters, a simple majority shall be needed to make any decision, unless otherwise specified in this document. A quorum of four-sixths (4/6) is required to do business. In the event of a tie, a National Staff member, voted upon by the Executive Board at the beginning of the year to act as a tiebreaker, shall break ties. On any vote, the quorum shall only be determined if there is a quorum call. Any voting disputes shall be settled by the National Chair.

SECTION 770. LEAVES OF ABSENCE.

Each member of the Executive Board and of an appointed National Staff shall be entitled to take leaves of absence, up to a combined four (4) weeks during their term, provided that one (1) week notice is given to the Executive Board prior to the leave and that the member can still be contacted for situations that only they are capable of addressing. The member must also leave in place protocols for the Executive Board to handle their duties during their leave. In the event that additional time is needed beyond the guaranteed four (4) weeks, additional time can be granted, one (1) week at a time, by the Adult Advisory Board. The Adult Advisory Board may choose to waive the notification requirement for a leave of absence.

SECTION 780. EXECUTIVE BOARD TRANSITION.

In presidential years, the newly-elected Executive Board shall undertake their roles at the conclusion of the Democratic National Convention (the Convention). This is also subject to exception if there is unanimous agreement between the outgoing National Chair and Vice Chairs and the incoming National Chair and Vice Chairs to transition power at a different date. In non-presidential years, the new Executive Board shall assume office at the conclusion of the annual Summit. If there is no Summit, the new Executive Board shall assume office at a time designated by the outgoing National Chair, but not to be longer than five (5) weeks after the election. Every member of the new Executive Board must undergo a cultural competency training approved by the Adult Advisory Board within one (1) month of assuming office.

SECTION 790. THE NATIONAL STAFF.

The Executive Board may appoint a National Staff to aid in fulfilling the responsibilities outlined in Section 730 and furthering the goals of HSDA as a whole.

- a) These individuals shall serve as extensions of the Executive Board and shall convene at least once every two (2) weeks. Minutes shall be taken and made available.
- b) The Executive Board may appoint an individual on a National Staff to supervise any other members, with the exception of the Diversity Director, who shall operate independently but must still attend any meetings of a National Staff.
- c) Prior to appointing members of a National Staff, the Executive Board shall provide any requested information to the Adult Advisory Board, which by a two-thirds (2/3) vote can veto any appointment within seven (7) days of notification; if no vetoes occur, the individuals can be appointed to a National Staff.
- d) The Executive Board may remove a member from a National Staff through a two-thirds (2/3) vote; the National Committee must be immediately notified of any removal. For seven (7) days following notification about a removal, the National Committee may pass a resolution appealing the removal to the Adult Advisory Board, which may compel the Executive Board to reappoint the removed individual by a two-thirds vote.
- e) A Regional Director may be removed from office if a Chair, Vice Chair, or National Committee representative files a motion of no confidence with the National Vice Chairs that is co-signed by the Chairs of two-thirds (2/3) of the chartered or interim state chapters within the region. The Executive Board may, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, overrule the states and reappoint the Regional Director. The National Vice Chairs shall oversee this process and shall ensure fairness and validity.

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f) A member of the National Staff may be removed from their position through the same impeachment process outlined in Section 745 for reasons outlined in Section 740.

g) No elected state leader (limited to an elected state Chair and, if elected, Vice Chair; other positions shall be exempt) shall hold any office of the National Staff at the concurrent time that they are serving in said elected office, except for the role of Regional Staff which may be held by an elected state leader.

ARTICLE VIII NATIONAL COMMITTEE

SECTION 810. ROLE OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

The National Committee shall endeavor to increase communication between state organizations and to promote policies that are to this organization's benefit.

SECTION 820. COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

The National Committee shall be composed as follows:

- a) Two (2) members from each chartered state unit, one of which must be a state leader
- b) The leader of each state unit given an alternative designation
- c) Diversity Director
- d) Two (2) members from each caucus, one of which must be a caucus leader

SECTION 830. DUTIES OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

The National Committee shall have the following duties:

- a) Work with national leadership to create expansion plans and programming to better engage their membership.
- b) Ensure proper communication of successful state chapter initiatives to the national organization and other state chapters.
- c) Approve or pass potential changes to these bylaws as described further in Article XI.

SECTION 840. MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

The National Committee shall meet monthly, at a time and manner prescribed by the Vice Chairs. The Vice Chairs may call special meetings for any reason. At least three (3) days notice shall be given before each meeting, except under extraordinary circumstances. Members must be present at three-fourths (3/4) of the meetings. Representatives of the Adult Advisory Board must be notified of National Committee meetings three (3) days prior to the meeting and will have the right to attend as non-voting participants.

If a National Committee member misses two consecutive meetings without being excused, they shall be automatically suspended from the National Committee and thus will not count towards quorum.

National Committee members are to be automatically excused without consequence for the following reasons:

- a) Religious Holidays or Obligations
- b) Family Emergencies or Bereavement
- c) Medical Emergencies
- d) Immigration Status Crisis
- e) Community Emergencies
- f) Detention by Law Enforcement, not including the period after one has been formally charged with a criminal offense

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Any other excuse must be granted by a Vice Chair at least twenty-four (24) hours before a missed National Committee meeting; excusals shall only be granted for compelling reasons.

Upon suspension, a National Committee member can request to be reinstated to the body, wherein the member's status will be under the discretion of the Vice Chairs.

If a Vice Chair is unable to attend a meeting of the National Committee for a reason that does not grant automatic excusal, they must receive an excusal from the Chair of the High School Democrats of America at least twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting. Vice Chairs who are chronically absent may be subject to impeachment.

Minutes shall be taken at all meetings of the National Committee, and accessible to all members of the High School Democrats of America.

SECTION 845. RULES OF VOTING.

Each member of the National Committee shall be entitled to one vote on any matter. A Vice Chair shall preside over all votes unless otherwise specified in this document, and votes shall be conducted through a conference call voting system unless otherwise directed by the presiding Vice Chair. The presiding Vice Chair shall only have the ability to vote on tied matters. Any member may make a motion, and all motions must be seconded by one (1) other member. For all matters, a simple majority with a quorum of one-half (1/2) shall be needed to make any decision, unless otherwise specified in this document. If a quorum is not reached within seven (7) days on any issue, a five-sixths (5/6) vote of those present shall waive all quorum regulations for said issue.

SECTION 850. REMOVAL OF A NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER.

A motion of no confidence must be submitted to the Vice Chairs by an existing member of the National Committee to begin the process of removal of a member. The motion must be co-signed by at least three (3) other members of the National Committee. A vote shall be scheduled within ten (10) days of when the motion is filed and shall be conducted by a Vice Chair in a necessary manner. At least five (5) days notice of the vote must be given and a two-thirds (2/3) quorum shall be required for the vote to occur. A member shall be removed by a simple majority vote of those present.

SECTION 860. ROLE OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE IN MANDATING A TOWN HALL.

At any time between the sessions of a National Committee meeting, a presence of 40% of total active National Committee members, shall have the right to petition for the public meeting of the National Executive Board. The petition may specify the specific items for the Executive Board to deliberate on. The Executive Board must obtain public comment at any such established meetings. At the time of the deliverance and the confirmation of the petition to the Chair of the National Committee the National Executive Board shall have two business weeks to comply with said petition.

All Petitioners must be active members of the National Committee and not currently serving as a member of the National Staff;

The above petition must be submitted virtually no earlier than 2 weeks removed from the last National Committee meeting and 1 week prior to the next National Committee meeting;

At the submission of said petition, the National Committee Chair shall have three (3) days to confirm that they have received the petition, and the Executive Board shall receive immediate notice and publish a time in accordance with the above section for the public meeting.

ARTICLE IX

CAUCUSES

SECTION 910. DEFINITION OF A CAUCUS.

Caucuses may be formed to represent groups that, because of their gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, religious beliefs, or ethnicity, face substantial discrimination in American society as a whole.

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SECTION 920. FORMATION OF A CAUCUS.

To form as a caucus, an individual shall contact the Diversity Director and the group seeking recognition must meet the following conditions:

- a) Meet the definition of a caucus.
- b) The Diversity Director must approve of the formation of this caucus.
- c) Receive the pledges of at least fifteen (15) HSDA members that they will participate in such a caucus if formed.
- d) The Executive Board, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, must approve of the formation of this caucus.
- e) The Diversity Committee, by a simple majority vote with each caucus being allowed with one vote, must approve of the formation of this caucus.

SECTION 930. CAUCUS STRUCTURE.

Each caucus shall democratically elect a leadership consisting of a Chair and Vice Chair who will serve a term not to exceed one (1) year. Active membership of a caucus shall be determined by average weekly engagement and must be reported to the Diversity Director monthly.

SECTION 940. DIVERSITY DIRECTOR.

Once a year, caucuses shall hold a joint leadership meeting to nominate an individual, who is not a caucus leader, to be appointed by the Executive Board to the position of Diversity Director on a National Staff. Each caucus shall have one vote at this joint meeting and all caucuses must have a representative present. Any individual, having received a simple majority of the votes cast, shall be referred to the Executive Board for appointment, wherein other provisions regarding National Staff appointments shall apply.

The Diversity Director shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- a) The Diversity Director shall maintain routine contact with the Executive Board to ensure that HSDA activities are inclusive and reflective of the diversity of its membership. To that end, the Diversity Director shall hold the Executive Board members accountable for ensuring that diversity and inclusion are priorities of the organization.
- b) The Diversity Director shall serve as a representative of all of the HSDA caucuses to the rest of the organization, acting as a resource to state and national leadership.
- c) The Diversity Director shall preside over the impeachment of any caucus leader.
- d) The Diversity Director shall be a member of the National Committee.
- e) The Diversity Director shall preside over meetings of the Diversity Committee, consisting of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of each caucus, which shall meet at least once every two (2) weeks.
- f) Oversee annual caucus leadership elections or any special elections that may arise.
- g) The Diversity Director may not hold, or seek, any position in caucus leadership.

In the event of a vacancy in the position of Diversity Director prior to the termination of their term, caucuses shall hold another joint leadership meeting where, following the same procedures as above. The National Chair shall preside over this meeting and once an individual is selected according to this section, they shall refer another individual to the Executive Board for appointment.

Three (3) or more caucuses can submit a motion in writing to the Chair of the High School Democrats of America to impeach the Diversity Director. Within fourteen (14) days of receiving the motion, the Ethics Council will investigate the accusations and may, through a two-thirds (2/3) vote, compel the Executive Board to remove the Diversity Director pursuant to Section 730(m).

SECTION 950. CAUCUS RESPONSIBILITIES.

The Chair and Vice Chair of a caucus must strive to ensure that the caucus and its membership remain active; caucuses must foster inclusive environments and strive to retain at least twenty (20) members. Caucuses must meet at least once every two (2) weeks and aim to hold public events pertaining to the identities of their membership. Caucuses may endorse candidates for public office provided that the endorsements adhere to Section 210 of this document. Caucuses as a whole shall be barred from endorsing a candidate for any HSDA office.

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The Chair and Vice Chairs of every caucus shall schedule a joint meeting with the Executive Board, Diversity Director, and any representatives appointed by the Adult Advisory Board at least once every month to discuss the current state of the High School Democrats of America. At this meeting, every caucus shall be required to submit a written report about their activities since the last joint meeting, including attendance numbers from caucus meetings.

SECTION 960. IMPEACHMENT OF CAUCUS LEADERSHIP.

A motion to remove a member of caucus leadership must be submitted in writing to the Diversity Director by a member of that caucus. The motion must be co-signed by two (2) other members of the caucus. An open hearing must be conducted not more than fourteen (14) days from the filing of the motion to hear evidence of the impeachment and the defense of the accused. The hearing shall be presided over by the Diversity Director. A vote of the caucus in question shall be scheduled within seven (7) days of the hearing. At least three (3) days notice of the vote shall be given and a two-thirds (2/3) majority is required to remove the accused.

In the event of the removal of a caucus leader, the Diversity Director shall oversee a special election to replace the removed leader.

SECTION 970. DISSOLUTION OF A CAUCUS.

A caucus may be dissolved for reasons including, but not limited to, lack of interest and consistently low membership. A motion to dissolve a caucus may be submitted to the Executive Board by the Diversity Director or by three (3) members of the caucus. An open hearing of the Executive Board must be conducted not more than fourteen (14) days from the filing of the motion to hear evidence related to the dissolution of the caucus in question, presided over by the Diversity Director. Within seven (7) days of the hearing, the Executive Board may vote to dissolve the caucus by a two-thirds (2/3) majority.

SECTION 980. ASSOCIATIONS.

Groups of HSDA members that do not meet the definition of a caucus or cannot form as a caucus may organize as Associations with approval by two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive Board. Upon formation, Associations shall serve as standing communities within HSDA until such time as two-thirds (2/3) of the Executive Board and two-thirds (2/3) of the National Committee move to dissolve an Association. Associations shall be coalitions of members in internal communities, to provide spaces for collaboration and discussion, under the supervision of the Development Director. Associations shall be permitted to endorse any candidates running for public office as long as the guidelines in Section 210 are followed and they may not endorse any candidate running for HSDA office. HSDA members who violate any provisions of the document as a result of their affiliation with an Association will be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to other sections of this document.

The Development Director shall establish guidelines governing all established Associations, each of which shall be required to have a democratically elected leadership with terms not to exceed one (1) year. Elections for Association leadership shall be overseen by the Development Director. An Association shall be permitted to have up to three (3) leadership positions, each of whom shall report directly to the Development Director.

A motion to remove a member of Association leadership may be submitted in writing to the Chair of the High School Democrats of America by a member of that Association. The motion must be co-signed by two (2) other members of the Association. Alternatively, the Development Director may submit a motion to remove a member of Association leadership to the Chair. An open hearing must be conducted not more than fourteen (14) days from the filing of the motion to hear evidence of the impeachment and the defense of the accused. The hearing shall be presided over by the Chair of the High School Democrats of America. A vote of the Executive Board shall be scheduled within seven (7) days of the hearing. At least three (3) days notice of the vote shall be given and a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Executive Board is required to remove the accused.

In the event of the removal of an Association leader, the Development Director shall oversee a special election to replace the removed leader.

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ARTICLE X

ETHICS COUNCIL

SECTION 1010. ROLE OF THE ETHICS COUNCIL.

The Ethics Council shall be a body to confidentially hear concerns about members, with the aim of upholding the organization's mission statement and adhering to the tenets of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The Ethics Council shall adjudicate disagreements and conflicts, where applicable, and may recommend action to certain other bodies.

SECTION 1020. COMPOSITION OF THE ETHICS COUNCIL AND THE FORMATION OF ADJUDICATION PANELS.

a) The Ethics Council shall be composed of six (6) voting persons with additional nonvoting representation from the Diversity Director, Chief-of-Staff, and National Chair to ensure timeliness and transparency. All members of the Ethics Council shall serve a term of one (1) year that ends in concurrence with the terms of the Executive Board.

i) The National Committee shall, at its first legislative meeting following the start of a new Executive Board term, elect from its membership one state representative to serve as the primary member, and one state representative to serve as the secondary member.

ii) The Diversity Committee shall, at its first meeting following the appointment of the Diversity Director, elect from its membership one caucus representative to serve as the primary member, and one caucus representative to serve as the secondary member.

iii) The Executive Board will designate one of the National Vice Chairs to serve as the primary member, and the other Vice Chair to serve as the secondary member.

b) Members of the Ethics Council may be removed at any time by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the National Committee or a unanimous vote of the Adult Advisory Board. Additionally, any body that designated the member as being their delegate to the Ethics Council may vote on a motion of no-confidence to remove their delegate at a threshold of two-thirds (2/3).

c) When a conflict or case arises that requires adjudication and mediation, the Ethics Council shall dissolve into an Adjudication Panel. All primary members of the Ethics Council shall serve on the Adjudication Panel unless there is a conflict of interest. If there is a conflict of interest, the secondary member representing the same constituency shall take their seat on the Adjudication Panel. If both members representing the same constituency have a conflict of interest, a replacement will be selected from the constituency by the Adult Advisory Board. Thus, an Adjudication Panel will consist of three (3) unbiased members able to reach a decision.

d) Only the Adjudication Panel may vote to take action against a member of the High School Democrats of America or an officer of the same. Motions are considered passed when two-thirds (2/3) of the Panel's members vote in favor. One can appeal the Adjudication Panel's decision to the whole Ethics Council, who may choose to alter the terms of reprimand by a vote of two-thirds (2/3).

SECTION 1030. DUTIES OF THE ETHICS COUNCIL.

The Ethics Council shall:

a) Act as an unbiased body in the interest of conflict resolution and growth within the organization.

b) Censure or otherwise reprimand members who do not uphold the mission statement and Bylaws of this organization or the tenets of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

c) Be able to mandate that members educate themselves on issues related to the mission, state, and bylaws of this organization or the tenets of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

d) Remove the right to membership, pursuant to Section 440, of individuals who have completed or attempted acts that undermine the inclusivity or authority of HSDA, including, but not limited to, acts of

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racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, homophobia, intolerance, bullying, financial malfeasance, sexual harassment, or repeated violations of the bylaws in ill-will.

- e) Remove any state or national leaders who have violated the mission or bylaws of the organization or the tenets of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, through a comprehensive and fair process.
- f) Be able to prohibit individuals from holding future positions at any level within HSDA.
- g) Have an established way to be contacted which shall be made public.
- h) Adopt a detailed Code of Ethics for themselves that includes and is compatible with the rules outlined in Section 1040.
- i) Remain in regular contact with the Executive Board and be briefed on ongoing ethical issues, litigation, and potential Bylaws violations.

SECTION 1040. CODE OF ETHICS.

- a) Members of the Ethics Council may not run for any other positions while they are members. If a member of the Ethics Council wishes to run for election or re-election, they must resign on the day they declare candidacy. Furthermore, the members of the Ethics Council may not endorse any person for any level of HSDA office while in office as a member of the Ethics Council.
- b) Members of the Ethics Council shall be prohibited from endorsing candidates for any office in the High School Democrats of America or its subsidiary organizations.
- c) No two (2) members of an Adjudication Panel may discuss an Ethics Council-related issue without informing the third member.
- d) The Adjudication Panel may not meet with parties to a conflict separately. Both conflicting parties must attend for a meeting to be in order.
- e) No member of an Adjudication Panel or Ethics Council may promise a result, attempt to influence voting unethically or manipulate discussions as a way to resolve conflict.
- f) No member of the Ethics Council may share personally identifying information with others under Section 430.
- g) Information shared with the Ethics Council in confidential conversations, including discussion of cases, Executive Board briefings, and other meetings, may not be shared outside the Ethics Council.
- h) If an ethics violation is committed by a member of the Ethics Council, the Adjudication Panel shall consist of the whole Council minus the accused. Committing an ethics violation as a member of the Ethics Council shall result in removal from the Council and from qualifying leadership positions.
- i) The non-voting members of the Ethics Council, as specified in Section 1020(a), are responsible for ensuring that the processes of the Ethics Council are transparent. Failure to do so may result in removal from the Ethics Council and/or the appointment of an individual responsible for ensuring transparency.

SECTION 1050. RIGHTS OF LITIGATING PARTIES.

a) DEFINITIONS:

- i) “Complainant” shall be defined as any individual who, under the processes of the applicable provisions, submits a complaint to the Ethics Council against an organization, individual, or group of individuals under HSDA Bylaws or applicable state bylaws.
 - ii) “Defendant” shall be defined as any organization, individual, or group of individuals who have had a complaint filed against them with the Ethics Council.
 - iii) “Applicable provisions” shall be defined as any rule existing in the Bylaws, applicable state bylaws, National Committee or Executive Board rules of order, or approved resolution that provides recourse for a complainant to lodge a complaint with the Ethics Council. Applicable provisions in the HSDA Bylaws, as they exist, include Section 430, Section 440, Section 540, Section 940, Section 1020(c), and Section 1040(h).
- b) The burden of proof shall be on the complainant. The complainant must prove, beyond reasonable doubt, that the defendant intended to and did violate the Bylaws and applicable provisions. The Ethics Council shall operate on an ‘innocent until proven otherwise’ manner.
 - c) Defendants and complainants have the right to call witnesses.

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d) Defendants and complainants have the right to a speedy, fair hearing. The Adjudication Panel reserves the right to hold an individual in contempt for intentionally delaying proceedings and may rule against them. Furthermore, if a defendant or complainant believes that there is a conflict of interest on the Adjudication Panel and the accused member does not recuse themselves, the defendant or complainant shall make note of the failure to recuse and may appeal.

ARTICLE XI ADULT ADVISORY BOARD

SECTION 1110. ROLE OF THE ADULT ADVISORY BOARD.

The Adult Advisory Board shall serve as a source of guidance and long-term structure for the High School Democrats of America while maintaining the integrity of a student-run organization. It shall assist the Executive Board with the financial and legal obligations for maintaining the High School Democrats of America.

SECTION 1120. COMPOSITION OF THE ADULT ADVISORY BOARD.

The Adult Advisory Board shall be made up of ten (10) total members. Some of these members shall be federal and statewide elected leaders and as such will be made honorary co-chairs. There shall be no more than three (3) honorary co-chairs. The remaining members of the Adult Advisory Board shall be made of Democratic/Progressive leaders from around the nation.

SECTION 1130. DUTIES OF THE ADULT ADVISORY BOARD.

The Adult Advisory Board shall have the following responsibilities and duties:

- a) Assist the Executive Board in managing the financial and legal responsibilities of the High School Democrats of America.
- b) Advocate for the High School Democrats of America in the broader Democratic and American community.
- c) Maintain a long-term structure and institutional memory of the High School Democrats of America.
- d) Ensure that members and leaders of the High School Democrats of America adhere to the provisions contained within this document.
- e) Serve as adjudicators in allegations of misconduct against members or leaders of the High School Democrats of America.
- f) Send representatives to meet with the Executive Board and any appointed members of a National Staff once every month.

SECTION 1140. SELECTION OF THE ADULT ADVISORY BOARD.

All Adult Advisory Board members shall serve until they either choose to resign their position or are removed by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of the other Adult Advisory Board members. The Executive Board shall appoint their replacement from a list of recommendations provided by the Adult Advisory Board with the consent of the National Committee unless such recommendations cannot be or were not given at least one month prior to the ending of an Advisory Board's member term, in which case any such appointments may be made by the incumbent Executive Board, pending confirmation by the National Committee no later than three-fourths of the way through the new Advisory Board's term.

SECTION 1150. STRUCTURE.

The Adult Advisory Board shall be constructed of the Governance and Finance Committees. The Committee on Governance shall advise incumbent leaders and members of the organization. The Committee on Finance shall aid the Executive Board in overseeing the organization's financial well-being. Members of the Adult Advisory Board may serve on one or both of such committees. The Adult Advisory Board shall have the authority to restructure itself as necessary, though no restructuring may occur without the majority approval of the incumbent Executive Board.

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ARTICLE XII ELECTION OF OFFICERS

SECTION 1210. NATIONAL ELECTION.

The High School Democrats of America shall conduct a national election every year through a ranked choice system. The election shall be conducted by the Development Director and votes shall be cast by ballot easily accessible to every member in the organization. Measures shall be taken to ensure that each voter casts his or her vote once. A simple majority of votes cast shall be necessary to obtain the desired office.

SECTION 1220. CONSTITUENCY.

All members of this organization as per Section 430(a) shall be given the right to cast one (1) vote in the national elections. All members wishing to cast their vote at the National Election must prove their status of eligibility as is deemed necessary by the Development Director.

SECTION 1230. VOTING.

All members shall have the ability to vote by the means set forth by the Development Director. The procedure for voting shall be published by the Development Director in an Election Guide published at least forty-five (45) days before the first day of voting.

SECTION 1240. CANDIDATES.

All members shall have the ability to run, provided they meet all requirements for candidacy and complete candidacy forms published each year by the Development Director. Candidates for national offices shall be prohibited from joining with other candidates in a slate.

SECTION 1250. BALLOTS.

Voting ballots for the National Election must include all properly registered candidates for each Executive Board position. Ballots shall be designed by the Development Director in a fair manner, and must be readable to all voters.

SECTION 1260. CERTIFICATION OF THE VOTE.

Certification of the vote shall occur with a simple majority of the Executive Board. Any voting irregularities, discrepancies, or allegations of improper influence shall be examined at this time, and remedied as necessary.

SECTION 1270. NOTICE.

The membership shall be notified of the election at least forty-five (45) days prior to the opening of the vote. They shall be informed of all positions available, and the process for becoming a candidate. Within seven (7) days of the first day of voting, all members shall be notified of all candidates for each position, and given a copy of their written statement. Voting instructions must be included with this notification.

SECTION 1280. DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR DISCRETION.

The Development Director shall have the right to add additional rules and regulations to those listed above within reason, but shall not have the right to remove any rules and regulations listed in this document.

SECTION 1285. DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR EXCEPTION.

In the event that the Development director is both entering a year other than their senior year and seeking election to the Executive Board, the senior-most Executive Board member, pursuant to Section 730 of the Bylaws, shall assume the duties of the Development Director for the duration of the elections. If there is no senior on the Executive Board, the National Committee shall appoint a senior to assume the electoral duties of the Development Director. This provision preempts any other provision in these bylaws that give the Development Director the authority to run national elections.

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ARTICLE XIII

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1310. GENERAL FUND.

A general fund of the High School Democrats of America shall exist, and shall be administered by the National Chair under the supervision of the Adult Advisory Board. All donations, fundraising proceeds, and other revenues shall be deposited into this fund at least once a month. All expenditures of the High School Democrats of America shall be paid from this fund.

ARTICLE XIV

AMENDMENT OF THE BYLAWS

SECTION 1410. AMENDMENT.

This document may be amended by a five-sixths ($5/6$) vote of the Executive Board with all members present along with a three-fourths ($3/4$) vote of the National Committee with a quorum of two-thirds ($2/3$) present AND/OR the approval of a two-thirds ($2/3$) majority vote of the Adult Advisory Board. Either the National Committee or the Executive Board may vote first for an amendment but the Executive Board must vote for an amendment in all cases.