Committees at the County/Senate District Conventions

Outlines of what work committees at County/SD conventions should undertake.

Choose To Operate As Committee Of The Whole 1

Credentials 1

Rules and Procedures 1

Resolutions and Platform 2

Nominations 2

Choose To Operate As Committee Of The Whole

Decide if your convention is going to be so small that you will need to operate as a committee of the whole. It makes no sense in a convention with 50 or less attendees to try to do these things by committee. In those cases, you will entertain a motion at the beginning of the convention. "I move to suspend the requirement of appointing convention committees and that we all operate as a committee of the whole body." This motion results in you and the members doing all the actions as motions and votes instead of adopting committee reports.

Credentials

It is the job of the Credentials Committee to be sure each convention attendee is a qualified participant and is assigned to the correct precinct. In order to be eligible, a person must be a Democratic voter who resides in the jurisdiction where the convention is being held and has either voted in the Democratic Primary or signs an oath of affiliation with the Democratic Party and has not voted in another party's primary or convention or supported a candidate of another party. In presidential years, the Credentials Committee might also be called on to resolve any disputes between presidential caucuses within a precinct caucus. The Credentials Committee Report certifying both the delegates in attendance and the precincts in attendance is the first report delivered to the convention.

Rules and Procedures

All Party conventions are governed by the Rules of the Texas Democratic Party and, unless otherwise required by the TDP Rules, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is the parliamentary authority. The Rules and Procedures Committee can propose additional guidelines for the operation of the County or SD convention. An example would be putting time or speaker limit on the debate on all resolutions or proposing that a small convention operates as a committee of the whole. Basically the R & P Committee can propose any operating guidelines that do not run contrary to the TDP Rules or Robert's. The R & P

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Committee can also propose alterations in the TDP Rules to be considered by the convention. These Rules change proposals can also come from the Resolutions Committee.

Resolutions and Platform

At the beginning of the convention, the convention Chair shall announce where and with whom resolutions shall be filed and the filing period must remain open for at least one hour following that announcement. Any participant in the convention can submit a resolution. Resolutions are brief statements that express the position of the convention on an issue or subject of interest to the body. They point out why the Party feels a certain way and what action the Party proposes to take based on those feelings. They can and do cover a wide array of topics. They can be memorials or congratulations or (as most are) issue-oriented. They can be local, state or national in scope. The job of the Resolutions Committee is to recommend to the body what resolutions the County or SD convention should forward to the State convention for consideration. The Committee should also be sure that resolutions it favorably recommends are in the correct format (whereas, whereas, therefore be it resolved) and accurately worded so as to express the position of the convention. Resolutions regarding purely local issues may be recommended and adopted but they should not be forwarded to the State convention as they serve their purpose when they are locally passed (they might be a topic for a local press release). Items intended to be platform planks may be recommended by this committee and convention to flow onto the state convention.

Nominations

The Nominations Committee's primary charge is to recommend to the convention a slate of at-large delegates to fill out the County or SD delegation to the State convention. In order to complete its assignment, the Committee will have to have reports from the precinct caucuses regarding delegates selected form the precincts. In making its recommendations the Committee should keep in mind the need for diversity of both ethnicity and constituency groups in a delegation and should strive for reasonably equitable representation. In presidential years the Nominations Committee will have the responsibility for making sure the presidential preference of the entire delegation reflects the preferences of the convention sign-in as much as is possible using the at-large delegation. At least 1/3 of all local delegations to the state convention must be of a different gender from the other 2/3, and, of course, more equal is better.

Twenty percent of the members of any committee can offer a minority report on any item before that committee and qualifying minority reports will be put before the convention. Any challenge to the Nominations Committee Report whether in a minority report or from the floor must specify not only who the substitution recommends making a delegate but also who is being removed. There are no secret ballots allowed either on the convention floor or in committees. There is no proxy voting allowed at County/SD conventions.

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