

THE DECLARATION OF INTENT

Recognizing that our organization, **The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)**, and, specifically, our Chapter of said organization **The Greater Baltimore Democratic Socialists of America (GBDSA)** is a predominantly white and white-led organization; we, as a majority-white organization in a predominantly Black city, our chapter must acknowledge that working toward *any* goal, regardless of how benevolent it is in intention, is, at best, an **act of colonization**, and makes The GBDSA an unintentional **Occupational Institution of White Supremacy**.

Recognizing this as a status that is antithetical to what the chapter would define as our mission, we, the members of **The Afrosocialist + Socialists of Color Caucus (DSAAC or The Caucus)**, demand radical, revolutionary changes that will improve conditions of equity, accountability, and accessibility for members within and potential member-candidates to know that the GBDSA is committed to a mission of Liberation through four broad tenets: **Reorganization, Restoration, Representation, and Rule**.

We, the members of **The Caucus**, submit this document to the **GBDSA** with a recommendation for immediate adoption.

Reorganization



TL ;DR: Under this subheading you'll find:

- *Sites of Struggle-centered organizing and campaigns ***
- *Audits leading to reaffirmation and/or dissolution of all ongoing chapter-wide campaigns*

COMMITTEES are a valuable and valid way to make sure that our members' personal passions align well with the project of anticapitalism. However, we are too often reactionary or over analytical and academic in our approach to community organizing.

Because of this, we frequently hear feedback from comrades within the committees and caucuses that we are, as an organization, internally siloed; members' goodwill is both limited and extraordinarily valuable, but it is often squandered by a lack of an intuitive method by which to become involved in community organizing projects.

From without, the adjudication of our impacts are far more grave: community leaders, even those who should be natural allies, don't know who we are, and/or don't see the value in approaching us to be accomplices in their Struggles.

Members of **The Caucus** therefore propose a “**SITES OF STRUGGLE**” **ORGANIZING MODEL** for the work of all of GBDSA in the Greater Baltimore region, but especially within the boundaries of Baltimore City Proper.

To wit, we believe it is necessary to conduct frequent (at least **once quarterly**), **in-person canvasses** of marginalized and disinvested communities in Baltimore, asking people about their needs and assisting them with plugging in to mutual aid efforts.

In areas where a **consistent, persistent, or urgent*** need is identified, GBDSA will establish that area as a *Site of Struggle*, at which point the work of our committees should **directly interface** with community members, meeting The People of Baltimore where they're at.

This organizing model may take longer to achieve radicalization at a Site or radicalization within the region, but it will more firmly establish or reestablish GBDSA as a willful accomplice in liberating The People.

With this in mind, The Caucus issues the following demands:

I. COMMITTEES

Committees will engage with this work by setting aside no fewer than ten minutes (per committee meeting) to either:

- A. Plan, discuss, and set a date for a canvass of no fewer than one (1) disinvested neighborhoods **or**
- B. Discuss new and ongoing work at the Site of Struggle, or to hear from [non chapter member] residents about how a committee can specifically and directly engage with the Site.

II. REAFFIRMATION OR DISSOLUTION OF ALL ONGOING CHAPTER-WIDE CAMPAIGNS

This Reaffirmation/Dissolution (i.e. “audits”) should be performed immediately, and subsequently, chapter-wide campaigns should be audited no less than **twice annually** {{more on this under “capacity-based voting” in the *Representation* heading}}.

NOTE: While we recognize that some projects are personally important to members, and that they reflect an investment of capacity and labor; we respectfully suggest that comrades who wish

to continue to focus on the work of an existing chapter-wide campaign **organize for it**. Chapter-wide campaigns can be adopted at any time, but the most impactful chapter-wide campaigns are those campaigns where members become involved because of their interest in the work; those same members foster an infrastructure that scaffolds their projects, building real, organic capacity among interested comrades, ~~and not because of a mandate from the DSA (National), our Steering Committee, or even, a disinterested (but supportive of the “idea”) General Body.~~

Restoration



TL;DR: Under this subheading you'll find:

- *Opt-in, not opt-out dues for members of color*
- *51% of all Chapter dues paid into the following buckets: The Caucus, Black-led Mutual Aid work or efforts (note: this could be formatted as direct cash infusions to those efforts **or** as Mutual Aid events developed by The Caucus), ongoing Black liberation work (note: at this moment, that would constitute our partnership with UPPP and the project of the Lanvale Tenants' Organizing)*
- *Restorative Justice to heal chapter and member trauma*

As an organization that seeks to fight capitalism and white supremacy, GBDSA has an unspoken but demonstrated commitment to engaging in **MUTUAL AID** work.

However, even modern Mutual Aid is bleached with the lack of accessibility that is resultant from *systemic white supremacy*: Black neighborhoods in Baltimore are categorically less likely to have access to high-speed internet (especially when you remove phone-only access from this accounting), and a great deal of the well-funded Mutual Aid efforts in Baltimore are chiefly accessible **only** through the internet and social media.

As has been repeatedly, thematically, and unfortunately restated throughout this document, GBDSA, as it is currently composed, is a colonial, occupying institution of white supremacy in a majority-Black city. Because of our historically majority white Steering Committee, decisions have been made for the direction and structure of GBDSA without the consent or express endorsement of Black and marginalized comrades and potential comrades.

Even our support and adoption of an internal [Racial Justice Framework](#) has been – in spite of the countless hours invested in said framework by comrades working in good faith – superficial at best and often harmful and deleterious.

We don't have information beyond the anecdotal for how many members have been deradicalized by moments or experiences like these, but **The Caucus** has a vested interest in ending similar experiences for current and future BIPOC comrades.

Restoration, as outlined herein, would require a "simple majority" but racially equitable percentage of monthly dues payments be invested, with priority, in micro-and-macro Liberation work, being done in Black communities, and importantly, being led by Black people.

*With this in mind, **The Caucus** issues the following demands:*

I. Authorization of a Restoration Fund

The Systemic Inequity of our current structure creates a system within GBDSA that is necessarily entropic and deeply oppressive; it spirals farther into whiteness because white members are more likely to

A. Have the economic freedom to invest capacity in GBDSA and

B. Invite people from their own communities to become new members.

Because of the self-fulfillingly-prophetic nature of this, organizers of color are not be able to appropriately restore our standing within the communities we wish to serve.

As such, **funding of the Restoration Fund** should occur, once, as a lump-sum payment of 51% of all money in chapter account(s) at the time of this document's adoption, and in perpetuity, at a rate of 51% of membership dues paid quarterly, at such time that National makes such disbursements. As this would necessitate a second account for the Restoration Fund, members of The Caucus will elect a **Restoration Fund Treasurer** who will act as steward and manager of the Restoration Fund.

II. Opt In, Not Opt Out Dues for members of color

III. Restorative Justice - Organize training in collaboration with chapter HGOs and partner organizations

Representation



TL ;DR: Under this subheading you'll find:

- A call for a chapter-wide member survey to determine demographic makeup of the chapter
- Proportionally Equitable Voting for General Body members and for The Steering Committee until such time that the chapter is either majority Black **and** Steering is also majority POC **or** That Baltimore's demographic basis is not-majority BIPOC.
- Capacity-based five-finger voting system
- An end to the rule of the tyrant Robert!

At the time of this writing, our organization is overwhelmingly white and historically white-led, with people of color representing only **4.5 votes** (all of which, excepting **The Caucus**, and the Electoral Committees, can or must be split with a white co-chair).

As an organization that does a majority of its organizing projects within the borders of Baltimore City — approximately 69.5% of our city is BIPOC, with more than 90% of *that* population being Black or African American — our leadership and membership are not reflective of the demographics of the region that we seek to serve.

Our General Membership demographics are equally egregious. At the time of this writing, only approximately **N%** of our members identify as BIPOC (**NOTE:** see call for demographic survey above).

*With this in mind, **The Caucus** issues the following demands:*

I. Proportionally Equitable Voting for General Body member votes.

We must seek to equitably represent BIPOC in decision-making done by **GBDSA**. For matters decided by a vote of the General Membership, **BIPOC** members would have additional per-member-of-color votes, creating a *virtual* demographic-homeostasis with broad racial representation among the general body. This will be reevaluated no fewer than two times per year, and the number of votes will be adjusted up or down accordingly to reflect the Chapter's demographic makeup in relation to Baltimore City.

Voting Formula

If BIPOC voting > 1 then

$$\text{BIPOC_Vote_Weight} = (\%_{\text{Baltimore_BIPOC}} / \text{BIPOC_Votes}) * 100;$$

$$\text{Non_BIPOC_Vote_Weight} = (\%_{\text{Baltimore_Non_BIPOC}} / \text{Non_BIPOC_Votes}) * 100$$

Else

$$\text{BIPOC_Vote_Weight} = (49\% / \text{BIPOC_Votes}) * 100;$$

$$\text{Non_BIPOC_Vote_Weight} = (51\% / \text{Non_BIPOC_Votes}) * 100$$

II. Proportionally Equitable Voting for Steering Committee votes

Because GBDSA is a majority white membership-organization with a base of organization in a majority Black city, our current system of democratic 1:1 votes to all members **defaults to racism**, routinely giving disproportional power to the vote of white membership over the voices of GBDSA's BIPOC, both in votes that take place within the General Body and the Steering Committee.

Therefore GBDSA, which operates in Baltimore City that is 69.5% BIPOC, must make the votes of GBDSA's members who identify as such equitable within the racial demographics of Baltimore City (per the latest census).

During Steering Committee and General Body Membership votes, **{FORMULA}**, must be used to determine the weight of votes of BIPOC membership who are present for the vote. This will ensure that BIPOC, have an equitable and representative voice in decisions made by the chapter.

Individual BIPOC members can use their own discretion over whether or not they would like to use the vote multiplier on any given vote they are participating in.

















~~We seek to create virtual simple majority with Baltimore City through a permanent additional vote for **each co-chair of The Caucus** bringing the minimum number of votes for **steering committee members of color** to achieve a total of \geq fifty-one percent (51%) of steering committee votes for BIPOC.~~

This rule ("Proportionally Equitable Voting for Steering Committee votes")exists only at such times where quorum is achieved, and every BIPOC on steering voting one way and every white person voting in the opposite way would lead to a victory for white voters.

This can be audited before each vote of the Steering Committee.

Voting Formula

Forthcoming

Race and Hispanic Origin	
 White alone, percent	 30.5%
 Black or African American alone, percent (a)	 62.4%
 American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent (a)	 0.3%
 Asian alone, percent (a)	 2.6%
 Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent (a)	 0.0%
 Two or More Races, percent	 2.5%
 Hispanic or Latino, percent (b)	 5.3%
 White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	 27.5%

Demographics Source: Population, [Census, April 1, 2020](#)


III. Capacity-based Five-Finger Voting System

For chapter-wide campaigns, including campaigns where the chapter is re-evaluating our ability to engage with an effort as a collective, we propose a system that allows GBDSA members to honestly and fearlessly evaluate their capacity when it comes to the level of their commitment to supporting a cause. Preliminary FFCV draft policy [can be found here](#).

IV. Greater Accessibility for all comrades: Robert's Rules

We seek to create a more welcoming space for comrades without the privilege of higher education or the fortune of quickly learning and adapting to new environments. **The Caucus** demands that we recognize members who are not fluent in *Robert's Rules*, and assume competence by the spirit of their participation, and not the letter. With the goal of eventually phasing out what is, for many, the equivalent of learning an invented language, with virtually no useful application outside of bureaucracy, we will assume *implied* adherence to Robert's Rules for members who don't adhere, or who don't wish to engage with vestigial instruments of white supremacy. Lastly, we demand that there be clarity and accessibility in internal operations of the chapters to lessen barriers to entry for prospective BIPOC members. This includes immediate and seamless access to the Caucus email account for Caucus Co-chairs.

Rule

 **TL ;DR:** Under this subheading you'll find:

- *Rationale for a temporary "same house, different rooms" bifurcation (under the same charter)*
- *Inviolable independence for The Caucus complete with additional internal bylaws and operating procedures, autonomous email and social media accounts, and insulated from "Open Chapter," non national bylaws changes that would undermine, change, or subvert the decisions made herein.*
- *Establishing The Caucus as a co-equal organization under the same charter to create a welcoming & safe space for organizers of color to flourish*

Rationale: *In a City where 69.5% of residents are BIPOC, the fight to expand socialism must include a profound commitment to building up leadership and collective power of BIPOC socialist organizers. In the face of a political and social landscape entrenched in white supremacy and systemic dehumanization of BIPOC, socialist spaces must seek to be a loving home for these organizers, one that welcomes them and fundamentally centers their worth. At this time, the GBDSA does neither.*

GBDSA is contending with deep seeded challenges as an organization. Rapid expansion coupled with a lack of systemic investment in dedicated anti-racist self-reflection and education among members and leadership have enabled a hostile environment to flourish throughout the organization.. This has resulted in widespread exodus of existing BIPOC membership and a lack of interest from BIPOC in joining the organization; has set back the efficacy of the organization as a whole; and has harmed relationships with Black-led progressive organizations in Baltimore City.

GBDSA, as currently structured, is not a space conducive to internal solidarity, trust, or community. Due to these conditions, the Caucus will separate from the GBDSA, until sufficient internal work and restructuring is done to build the organization's capacity to honor and respect the dignity of BIPOC organizers, their allies, and their communities, as determined by members of the Caucus..

With this in mind, ***The Caucus*** issues the following demands:

*Members of color will onboard into the chapter through The Caucus, until such time as The Caucus recombines with the Original Chapter writ large, or until such time as those members choose to participate in Original Chapter business. Those members will remain members of the Original Chapter in full, and will hold the full rights and privileges understood to come with membership. The Caucus, while following the general bylaws of the National DSA, will function autonomously (but beneath the same charter and all binding bylaws therein) independent of the GBDSA **except for matters of financial import**. The Caucus will reconvene with the Original Chapter annually for **Chapter Elections & Convention**, and will reconvene permanently with the Original Chapter, at such time as members of The Caucus democratically approve doing so.*

The Guiding Principle of The Declaration Of Intent is that ***Oppressed Persons should be the leaders of their own Struggles, and should be granted self-determination.***

This Principle has been absent from The Greater Baltimore DSA, even if it has been nominally referred to as "good" or "right."

This document concretely and inviolably establishes that right to self-determination and self-governance as a priority that is exercised within the Chapter.