

Defend Democracy through Political Independence

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Whereas

1. The Republican Party and the extreme Right pose a significant danger to the multiracial working class in the United States. The ongoing threat to democracy and civil rights and the offensive against the material conditions, liberty, and lives of women, Black people and people of color, immigrants, and the LGBTQ+ community should not be underestimated. However, the objective threat of an authoritarian turn is considerably lower now than it was when Republicans controlled the Presidency. The insurrectionary strategy of the extreme Right failed during the January 6, 2021 Capitol events and the main threat to democracy currently comes from Republican Party control over institutions.
2. Despite the ongoing threat posed by the Republican party and the extreme Right, the Democratic Party remains the primary political opponent of the working class in the 'blue' states, cities, and districts where DSA is often strongest. Even at the national level, the Democratic Party has proved more resilient than most socialists anticipated. Meanwhile, the Biden administration has sometimes adopted reformist tactics in response to the danger posed by the Republican Party, but its aim remains the defense of capitalism. DSA faces overwhelming pressure from Democrats and liberal NGOs to 'defend democracy' on terms that compromise our movement and play into capitalist plans.
3. On the international level, a political field polarized between the Center and the Right poses a difficult terrain for the socialist Left and the workers' movement. When the extreme Right wins, the working-class loses: look at Italy, where the neofascist Giorgia Meloni is prime minister. When centrists win, the working-class also loses: in France, centrist Emmanuel Macron defeated the Right to win the Presidency and launch a violent, regressive 'reform' of the French retirement system. Capital has an objective stake in preserving this type of polarization.
4. The core task of U.S. socialists is to build the independent socialist organization and working-class institutions like unions that enable us to fundamentally break the 'impasse' we find ourselves in and durably defeat the Right. However, in practice both capitalist parties oppose powerful independent working-class institutions, even if the Democrats sometimes extend a hand to organized labor in order to maintain a foothold in the working class. In order to combat the Right, we must resist being subsumed into the Democratic Party and its NGO apparatus.
5. Socialists should also work to defend and expand democracy through agitation around civil rights, anti-racism, women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and the ability to form a union and to strike. Mass movements build the confidence and organization of the working class and inoculate against right-wing politics.

6. Our strategy for combating the Right should not exclusively focus on elections and the formal political terrain. A significant number of workers and young people avoid voting altogether because the Democratic Party has failed them and they don't trust politicians; an equally significant current of workers vote primarily *against* Republicans, not *for* Democrats. Only a narrowing stratum of workers, typically over 45, remain ardent Democrats. However, that doesn't mean workers don't care about the outcomes of elections.

7. Our commitment to confronting the Right at the ballot in 2024 should selectively focus on preventing Republican subversion of democracy and civil rights. DSA should articulate a robust vision of democracy different from that of both capitalist parties.

Be it resolved

1. DSA shall contribute to mass movements in defense of democracy; civil liberties; racial equality and Black liberation; women's rights, including abortion rights; LGBTQ+ rights; and the ability to form a union and to strike. These campaigns should aim to alter class consciousness, immunize the working class against the extreme Right and the Republican Party and empower us to recruit and build both DSA and working-class institutions. DSA should encourage movements that prioritize mass participation and independence over recognition from top-down NGOs and the Democratic Party. Potential tactics for this approach include:
 - Hosting or participating in rallies and protests against the Republican nominee and the radical Right focusing on their attempts to undermine and attack democracy, workers', and civil rights.
 - Organizing with YDSA, student groups in high schools and colleges, as well as teacher, student workers, faculty, and other unions against legislation, executive orders, and judicial rulings that would target their members and institutions (for example, legislation prohibiting anti racist curriculum).
 - Initiating campaigns and ballot measures that defend and expand democracy and civil rights and shift working class consciousness to the disadvantage of the radical Right and Republican Party.
2. The NPC shall form a multi-tendency national committee to prepare for the 2024 national election by putting forward a positive program modeled after our 2020 DSA-For-Bernie campaign platform. The committee shall be formed no later than August 31, 2023 and draft a

program by no later than November 30, 2023. The program shall be revised by the NPC and submitted to a membership-wide vote no later than December 31, 2023. The 2024 program must be approved by a majority vote in order to be accepted and published. The committee shall also publish standardized recommendations to chapters, endorsed DSA candidates, and electeds about political communications during the 2024 elections. After the platform program is adopted, the committee shall also be empowered to identify, plan, and initiate a nationwide Priority campaign in defense of democracy and civil rights. The committee's mandate includes: political education, trainings, communications, and producing materials publicizing our vision.

3. Local DSA chapters shall adopt a common strategy for political communications relating to the 2024 elections while preserving tactical flexibility based on local conditions. Key themes include: defending democracy from corporate control; positive messaging around our program, democratic socialism, and building working-class institutions independent of the two parties; showcasing our endorsed candidates, referenda, and campaigns; and criticism of both the Republicans and centrist Democrats that draws out the contrasts between our visions.
4. The NPC shall organize DSA-endorsed candidates and electeds to adopt the same strategy outlined for DSA chapters above. The NPC shall publicly communicate disapproval to endorsed candidates and elected DSA members who reject this strategy in order to explicitly or tacitly support centrist leaders of the Democratic Party (for example, by attending rallies on behalf of centrists, political communications, or explicit endorsement of centrist Democrats).
5. Any DSA endorsement of a Presidential candidate must be submitted to a membership-wide vote and pass by a simple majority.