

**Ratified August 22, 2021**

**THE PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATS OF HOWARD COUNTY BYLAWS**

**Article I. NAME & STATUS**

The name of this club shall be the Progressive Democrats of Howard County, herein referred to as PDHC. The PDHC is an incorporated organization registered in the State of Maryland and operating as a 501(c)4 according to the rules and regulations of Section 501 in the Internal Revenue Service code.

**Article II. PURPOSE, MISSION & VISION**

**PURPOSE:** It is the goal of the PDHC to promote progressive principles and policy, educate the community, and advocate for a government that represents the public good by building a people-powered movement. In this effort, the PDHC is committed to advocating for compassion-based policies that benefit the community and transparent leaders who are accountable to the people, not to profit-driven special interest groups.

**MISSION:**

The Mission of the PDHC is to promote good government at the federal, state and local levels by amplifying the power of the people as the voters and constituents of elected officials.

To adopt progressive policy positions on issues regarding (but not limited to) legislation, initiatives, and ballot questions; and to actively support those endorsements and/or positions.

To hold elected officials accountable for their legislative votes, statements, legislative actions, and policy positions.

To ensure a strengthened democracy by participating in or leading initiatives to get special interest, corporate and dark money out of our political process.

To ensure that land use & zoning policy works towards the collective benefit of those in Howard County.

To endorse principled progressive candidates.

To educate the public on policy issues, providing opportunities for community members to participate in the democratic process and advocacy.

To join coalitions and work with other members of the community to lead or participate in initiatives to bring about positive change for the community.

To encourage civic duty, and participation in voter registration and the voting process.

To support the initiatives, policy positions, platforms and candidates insofar as they meet with the purpose, mission and vision of the PDHC.

To build a better, more equitable society by encouraging original ideas and meaningful dialogue from members.

VISION: A local and state-wide community where the power of the political process resides with the people, represented without corruption or persuasion by moneyed or corporate interests.

Elected officials that represent the constituents of the community, without persuasion of self-interests and political power.

Climate justice, social justice, immigrant justice, economic justice, racial justice, and fair land use policy that represents the collective benefit of those in Howard County.

### **Article III. MEMBERSHIP**

The original PDHC members (henceforth referred to as the “Charter members”) shall be considered those who have been found to meet membership eligibility requirements, and have paid membership dues as of the 2021 Annual Meeting.

New members must be voted into the organization by a majority of PDHC members at a General membership meeting., to ensure that the initial Mission, Vision, and Purpose Statement created by the Charter members are fulfilled.

Membership is open to any individual aged 14 years and older who reside in Howard County who have agreed to and signed the “Mission, Vision and Purpose Statement of the PDHC” as required at the time of payment of dues. Voting privileges are allowed to dues-paying members. It is not required to be a registered Democrat or with any political party in order to join the PDHC.

Membership can be revoked by a majority vote of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of members at a General membership meeting. Members will be automatically removed if they have not attended a meeting or club event, or have not otherwise been an active member, for 6 months.

## **Article IV DUES**

- Sec. 1 Membership dues shall be paid annually by individuals or families at a rate determined by the Executive Board. At the time of payment, members must agree to (via physical or electronic signature) the “Mission, Vision and Purpose Statement of the PDHC.”
- Sec. 2 Such dues shall be payable to the PDHC annually in advance for the year beginning on January 1 and ending the following December 31. Each member shall be notified that payment is due by the Secretary.
- Sec. 3 Members whose current year's dues are unpaid as of February 1 will be deemed in arrears and shall be notified that their dues payment is late and if their membership dues are not paid by March 31, their PDHC membership will expire.
- Sec. 4 Members who join between October 1 and January 1 shall not be assessed again until January of the following year.

## **Article V. VOTING**

- Sec. 1 Each voting member shall be entitled to one vote.
- Sec. 2 A new member is eligible to vote at an Annual, General, or Special meeting after payment of dues on all matters except a motion calling for an endorsement of any candidate, or to vote on bylaw amendments. For endorsement and by-laws they must be a member for fourteen (14) calendar days.
- Sec. 3 Proxy votes are not allowed at any meeting of PDHC.

## **Article VI. MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

Each member shall provide the Secretary or his or her designee with the member's contact information, including his or her current address, phone number, cell phone number and email address. If purchasing a family membership, all names, contact numbers and email addresses must be provided to the Secretary in order for the member to have full access to voting capabilities.

Members are responsible for informing the Secretary or his or her designee of any changes to this information in order to maintain the ability to take certain votes for the organization.

## **Article VII. ENDORSEMENTS**

The Board shall determine which candidates running for office during any election cycle may be considered for endorsement by the PDHC, according to candidates' alignment with the Purpose, Mission and Vision of the PDHC, and any other criteria decided by the Board. Endorsements for candidates in any election shall not be determined by party, but shall instead be determined by the strength of the candidates' platforms.

The list of potential candidates to endorse prepared by the Board can be amended with a 2/3s vote from General Members in attendance.

The slate of candidates that may be considered for endorsement shall be released to the membership from the Board fourteen (14) calendar days prior to any scheduled endorsement meeting.

A vote to endorse any candidate shall be done by secret ballot and shall require a majority in favor.

Notice of endorsement meetings for a scheduled public election, regular or special, shall be given to all members at least fourteen (14) calendar days in advance of such meeting.

For members to be eligible to vote at an endorsement meeting, members must have joined the PDHC 14 days prior to the meeting at which the endorsement is voted upon.

Adoption of a motion taking a position on a ballot question (either state or local) shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of those members present.

If the endorsement meeting is canceled for technical issues or any other unforeseen reason, the meeting shall be rescheduled by the Board of the PDHC. Members and candidates shall be notified of the new endorsement meeting date.

Upon an official decision to endorse any given candidate, that candidate will be notified by the President of the PDHC of their endorsement, and will receive logo usage permission along with any additional material or instructions as determined by the Board.

PDHC may also distribute literature educating the public on its endorsed candidates.

The PDHC may, in lieu of regular endorsements, launch other initiatives as they pertain to candidates for elected office as the Board decides for any given election cycle.

## **Article VIII. MEETINGS**

Sec. 1 There shall be an annual meeting each September for the purpose of electing officers of the PDHC Executive Board. The meeting shall be announced in a timely manner.

Sec. 2 General membership meetings shall be held at least eight (8) times per year in as many months, as determined by a simple majority vote of the PDHC Executive Board, and be announced in a timely manner to the PDHC general membership.

Sec. 3 Special meetings shall be held as determined by the President, by a simple

majority of the Executive Board or by a petition of at least ten percent (10%) of the members of the club as presented to the President, and provided that notice is given at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of said meeting.

Sec. 4 The Executive Board shall meet at least eight (8) times per year in as many months, as determined by the President, upon three (3) calendar days notice to the Executive Board members.

#### **Article IX. EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Sec. 1 The Executive Board shall be composed of the officers (see Article XI) and the At-Large board members. The number of Executive Board members shall be no more than thirteen (13) voting PDHC members.

Sec. 2 All Executive Board meetings shall be open to all dues-paying PDHC members.

Sec. 3 A quorum of the Executive Board shall be a simple majority of all Executive Board members.

Sec. 4 Action by the PDHC Executive Board shall be reported to the membership no later than the next PDHC meeting.

#### **Article X. ELECTIONS**

Sec. 1 The election of Officers and Board members shall be held at the Annual meeting, and the inaugural annual meeting was held in September, 2021.

Sec. 2 The nominating committee of at least three (3) and no more than seven (7) voting members, who are not currently officers, nor candidates for public office or current Elected officials who hold public office, staff for candidates or current Elected officials who hold public office, nor family of current candidates or Elected officials who hold public office, of the PDHC shall be appointed by the President and approved by a simple majority vote of the Executive Board at least thirty (30) calendar days before the Annual meeting.

Sec. 3 The Nominating Committee shall seek and nominate persons for each office.

Sec. 4 The Nominating Committee shall also nominate at least three (3) persons to be At-Large members of the Executive Board.

Sec. 5 The Nominating Committee shall notify voting members of the nominations in the written notification of the annual meeting. Every member seeking office shall be listed.

Sec. 6 Eligible nominees cannot include candidates for public office or current Elected officials who hold public office, staff for candidates or current Elected officials who hold public office, nor family of current candidates or Elected officials who hold public office

Sec. 7 Additional nominations for the officers and the three At-Large elected Board members may be made from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

Sec. 8 If an election is contested, the voting shall be by secret ballot. If there is no majority, there will be a run-off as follows:

Officers- For any vote with three or more candidates for a single seat, the election shall be decided by ranked choice voting.

Sec. 9 All officers of the club and the three At-Large Board members shall be elected for one year, and their term of office shall begin at the end of the Annual meeting.

Sec. 10 No person shall serve as Treasurer for more than two (2) consecutive terms at a time.

## **Article XI. OFFICERS**

The officers of the club shall be President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and three (3) At-Large positions. Separate from the Officers, a Parliamentarian can be appointed upon a majority vote of the Executive Board, upon consent from the Parliamentarian candidate. The Parliamentarian should be a PDHC member. The Parliamentarian is not a voting member of the Executive Board, and is simply an advisory role.

Duties of the officers:

The President shall preside at all PDHC meetings and be the official spokesperson for the PDHC. The Vice-President shall preside at all meetings during the absence of the President or at the President's request; and shall assume the Presidency should the President resign or be removed from office.

The Treasurer shall keep all PDHC records related to dues and general finances; give a Treasurer's Report at each Executive Board meeting or any other time the President requests, and pay all obligations as discussed and approved by the Board. Expenditures over \$100.00 must be voted on for approval by a majority vote of the Executive Board. The Treasurer should write all checks for outgoing expenditures. Double signatures will be required for all checks, signed by both the President and the Treasurer. All expenditures should be discussed at Board meetings.

The Vice-President shall assist the President with preparing for General or Special meetings. The Vice President shall also lead the drafting of endorsement efforts.

The Secretary shall record the minutes of all Executive Board, General and Special meetings and any other meeting as requested by the presiding officer; send out meeting notices; report mail correspondence received; and keep all non-treasury records of the PDHC. The Secretary shall also keep an updated Membership List, which shall also be accessible to all members of the Executive Board at all times.

The Treasurer, Secretary, President shall have equal access to all financial accounts. All online account passwords shall be shared by the Treasurer, Secretary and President. At no time shall only one member of the organization have sole access to the financial accounts. Clear refusal to share financial account access with the other designated executive board members as outlined in these bylaws shall result

in immediate removal of the member from their Board position.

Annual audits must be performed on *all* financial records- including all income accounts (ex: Venmo, Paypal, bank statements, online payment accounts, etc.) in the month of February. The audit shall be performed by the Vice President, Treasurer and a designated At-Large board member as chosen by a majority vote of the Executive Board. A report of the audit shall be presented to the membership by the Vice President in the general membership meeting during the month following the conclusion of the audit. The audit shall not take more than (30) calendar days to complete.

Eligibility to hold office shall not be limited by the holding of positions in other organizations.

## **ARTICLE XII. VACANCIES**

The President shall, with the approval of a majority of the Executive Board, nominate voting member(s) of PDHC to fill vacancies on the Executive Board, including officers other than President. The member shall assume the position upon approval by a simple majority vote of the general membership.

## **ARTICLE XIII. RECALL**

Sec. 1 A Board Member can be recalled, including but not limited to conflict of interest and conduct detrimental to the PDHC, by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those members present and voting at a General or Special meeting of the membership.

Sec. 2 The recall process shall be initiated upon petition of 20% of PDHC voting members, provided that notice of such recall action shall have been given in writing, via physical mail and email, to allow the Board Member to respond in writing, at least ten (10) calendar days before the General or Special meeting of the membership during which the recall action will be voted upon. Notice of the proposed recall action shall also be provided to the membership at least ten (10) calendar days prior to said meeting.

## **ARTICLE XIV. COMMITTEES**

Sec. 1 The Executive Board or club membership may establish Standing Committees as by a simple majority vote.

Sec. 2 The President shall, with the approval of a majority of the Executive Board, designate such ad hoc committees as deemed necessary and nominate the chairpersons, who shall be subject to approval by the general membership.

Sec. 3 A member is eligible to serve as a committee chairperson if they have been a

member in good standing of PDHC.

#### **ARTICLE XV. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

- Sec. 1 Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all meetings of PDHC, and shall be referenced for procedure in all cases where specific rules are not addressed or specified within these Bylaws.
- Sec. 2 A motion to call the question shall not be considered in order until an opportunity has first been provided for someone to speak in favor of, and someone to speak opposed to, the question.

#### **ARTICLE XVI. AMENDMENTS**

- Sec. 1 These By-Laws shall be amended at any Board meeting and ratified by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a General, Special, or Annual membership meeting.
- Sec. 2 The proposed language of such amendments must be provided to voting members at least ten (10) calendar days before the meeting at which they will be considered.
- Sec. 3 The By-Laws shall be distributed to every member of the club by the Secretary, not later than ten (10) calendar days after any meeting at which the By-Laws have been amended.

#### **ARTICLE XVII. QUORUM**

No action may be taken at any Annual, General, Special or Endorsement membership meeting unless at least 15 percent of eligible PDHC members are present.