



Hernando County Democratic Executive Committee Official Bylaws

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ARTICLE I: GENERAL POLICIES

Section 1. Name

1.1 Establishment The official name of this organization shall be The Hernando County Democratic Executive Committee, hereinafter HCDEC.

Section 2. Preemption

- 2.1 Authority The HCDEC shall be responsible for discharging Democratic Party affairs within Hernando County. It derives its authority from Article V of the Charter, and Article V and VI of the Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party (hereinafter FDP). No provision of the HCDEC Bylaws shall conflict with or contravene any of the provisions of the adopted Charter and Bylaws of the FDP.
- 2.2 Loyalty Oath Before taking office, the members of the HCDEC, including Party officers, Party candidates, elected Democratic officials, and elected members of Party committees, commissions, and clubs, shall execute by written oath or affirmation the loyalty oath (in the form included in the Bylaws of the FDP before taking office, or, in the case of a candidate running for the Party's nomination, at the time of qualifying. Said oath or affirmation may be amended in the same manner as provided for amending the Bylaws of the FDP. The members of the HCDEC shall execute, by written oath or affirmation, the loyalty oath in the form included as Attachment 2. (FDP Charter Article I, Section 6)
- 2.3 Meetings All meetings of the HCDEC and its components shall be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical disability or sexual orientation. No vote shall be taken by secret ballot. Adequate records shall be kept of all meetings. (FDP Charter Article I, Section 4.1.1)
- 2.4 Nondiscrimination No tests for membership in, nor oaths of loyalty to, the HCDEC shall be required or used which have the effect of requiring prospective or current members of the HCDEC to acquiesce in, condone, or support discrimination on the grounds of race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity and expression. (FDP Charter Article I, Section 4.1.2)
- 2.5 Fee Limitation No qualification fee, in excess of the amount provided by law, may be charged for any office of the HCDEC. (FDP Charter Article I, Section 4.1.3)
- 2.6 Endorsement The HCDEC shall not endorse, certify, screen, or recommend in any manner, one (1) or more candidates in primary elections, or for the Party's nomination.

Section 3. Governance

3.1 Procedure Unless otherwise provided in the Charter or Bylaws of the Florida Democratic Party and that of the HCDEC, the latest revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern.

3.2 Proxies Any member, who for any reason is unable to attend any meeting of the HCDEC, may execute a written proxy. Such proxy shall be sworn to before a notary public, or, in the alternative, may be validated by two (2) registered Democrats signing as witnesses. Any proxy which is incomplete in any way shall be returned to the member issuing the proxy. The member sending the incomplete proxy shall be notified immediately by phone or electronic mail transmission that the proxy is incomplete. The holder of such proxy shall be a qualified Democrat not a member of the HCDEC before which said proxy is to be presented. No person shall be permitted to hold more than one (1) proxy.

(a) An elected member of the HCDEC shall designate a Democrat residing in the same precinct as said elected member. An automatic, appointed, or at-large member of the HCDEC shall designate a Democrat residing in Hernando County. For a proxy to be honored by the HCDEC, the holder shall submit written notice to the HCDEC Chair prior to the meeting.

(b) Proxies may not account for more than ten percent (10%) in computing a Quorum.

(c) Proxies shall not be considered in the fulfillment of attendance requirements.

(d) Said Proxy shall be in substantially the form of Attachment #1 of these Bylaws and shall be verified by the Secretary.

3.3 Membership List The names and addresses of the members of the HCDEC, as well as the officers of the HCDEC, shall be furnished to the State Chair immediately after the organizational meeting. Changes in membership shall be furnished in writing to the State Chair within ten (10) days. A complete and updated membership list shall be sent to the State Chair by January 31, of each year. (FDP Bylaws Article V, Section 5.2)

3.4 Audit There shall be annual audits of the financial condition of the HCDEC for each calendar year ending December 31 in compliance with applicable Florida Statutes and conducted by qualified examiners who shall not be members of the HCDEC. Audits shall be conducted in substantial compliance with standard accounting procedures. Copies shall be retained by the HCDEC for the examination of any member thereof for a period of no less than five (5) years, and copies shall be furnished to the Supervisor of Elections and to the State Chair prior to April 1 of the ensuing year. (FDP Bylaws Article V, Section 5.4)

3.5 Amendment The Bylaws of the HCDEC may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) of those present and voting, providing no amendment may be voted upon without ten (10) days written notice of the proposed amendment and meeting. A copy of the amended Bylaws shall be filed with the FDP within thirty (30) days of approval.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Elected Members

1.1 Precinct System The elected membership of the HCDEC shall consist of a man and a woman from each precinct who are registered Democrats, and who reside in, are registered to vote in, and are elected from the precinct they are to represent. Should the voter registration of any precinct exceed one thousand (1,000) as of January 1 of a year in which qualifying for election to county Democratic Executive Committee occurs, the county Democratic Executive Committee may, by amendment to its Bylaws, and upon immediate notification to the Supervisor of Elections of that county by confirmed communication method, and upon immediate notification to the State Chair by confirmed communication method, elect an additional one (1) man and one (1) woman to represent all such precincts. They shall be elected by a plurality vote on the first primary ballot of each Presidential election year. At any time a precinct totals one thousand (1,000) registered voters or when new precincts are created, additional county Democratic Executive Committee positions shall be created. Such positions shall be filled by the county Democratic Executive Committee according to its procedures for filling vacancies.

(a) Once a person is elected in a precinct, even if that person should move out of that precinct and be appointed at-large or to fill a vacancy in the precinct or fill a vacancy in the precinct into which he or she moved, for the purpose of eligibility to seek office, such person shall be classified as an elected member for the duration of that term. If a vacancy does not exist in the precinct where the member moves, a special at-large status shall be created for that member not to be counted against the total number of appointed members available to the HCDEC.

(b) DEC members shall qualify and be elected to office at such times and in such manner as provided by Florida Statutes.

1.2 Term of Office Elected members of the HCDEC shall take office on the first day of the month following each presidential general election and shall serve for a term of four (4) years.

Section 2. Appointed Members

2.1 Defined Membership of the HCDEC may include an additional ten percent (10%) of the total elected membership to which entitled. These members shall be appointed by the HCDEC Chair and approved by a majority vote of the membership of the HCDEC present and voting. Appointed members shall be registered Democrats residing in the county. Appointed members shall serve at-large and shall enjoy voting and other privileges and responsibilities of membership except holding office. Selection of appointed members shall be made in order to achieve political, economic, or minority balance within the HCDEC.

2.2 Term of Office The term of office shall be one (1) year commencing with the date of appointment, however, it shall expire immediately prior to the commencement of the organizational meeting of the next committee.

2.3 Special At-Large Status At any time after the election of officers, the HCDEC may allow, at the request of a Democratic Party elected official from the county, state, or national Democratic Party level, a special at-large status for that person. Such positions shall not be included in the HCDEC appointed membership quota. If the elected official is an elected member of the HCDEC, a vacancy would be created in the precinct that he or she represents. Said vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the HCDEC Bylaws.

Section 3. Automatic Members

3.1 Defined Automatic Membership shall include all Hernando County residents who are partisan or nonpartisan Democratic elected officials and the Presidents of duly chartered, local Democratic clubs. Automatic Members shall enjoy voting privileges, but shall not serve as officers of the HCDEC.

- (a) Automatic Members shall not be required to meet attendance Requirements.
- (b) Automatic Members shall not be counted in determining a quorum.

Section 4. Revocation

4.1 Process Any membership in the HCDEC may be revoked, upon a 2/3 vote of the membership present and voting at any regular or special meeting after a minimum of ten (10) days written notice to the members that a motion for dismissal of said person will be considered at this meeting. The removal may be for causes including, but not limited to the following; malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, incompetence, permanent inability to perform official duties, disrespectful and disruptive personal behavior, and/or conviction of a felony involving moral turpitude.

Section 5. Vacancy

5.1 Conditions A precinct level office shall be deemed vacant when a member moves from Hernando County, accumulates three (3) unexcused absences in any one (1) calendar year, or has his/her membership revoked. An absence is excused for reasons of illness, family emergency, business, out-of-town, or other reasonable excuse, with prior notification to the HCDEC Chair or Secretary.

5.2 Acting on Vacancy Vacancies on the HCDEC shall be filled by action of the HCDEC within sixty (60) days in accordance with Florida Statutes.

- (a) After a vacancy has existed for sixty (60) days, it may be filled by the State Chair.
- (b) Those persons appointed to fill precinct vacancies must be registered Democrats residing within the precinct that they are appointed to represent, and must fulfill all other conditions and requirements of membership.

ARTICLE III: OFFICERS

Section I. Conditions

- 1.1 Defined The HCDEC, at its organizational meeting, shall elect a Chair; a Vice-Chair, who shall be of the opposite sex from the Chair; a Secretary; a Treasurer; State Committee persons (number to be determined by FDP and must be gender neutral); and any other officer(s) deemed necessary, whom shall be elected from among the precinct committee persons.
- 1.2 Terms of Office Terms of office are for four (4) years, unless otherwise provided for in the HCDEC bylaws, or specified upon the creation of the office at an organizational meeting.
- 1.3 Fiduciary The elected offices of Chair and Treasurer shall be authorized to sign checks or make expenditures; there shall be one authorized signature on each and every check. All disbursement of funds shall comply with relevant Florida Statutes regarding their authorization. Should the Chair be on leave, incapacitated, or vacant, the Vice-Chair shall inherit such authority.
- 1.4 Residency Only full-time residents of Hernando County shall be eligible to hold office.

Section 2. Vacancies

- 2.1 Chair Vacancy: In the event of a vacancy in the office of the HCDEC Chair, a meeting shall be held within forty-five (45) days, upon written notice to members of at least fifteen (15) days, to elect a new chair. Notice of vacancy shall be sent by certified mail to the state Chair within ten (10) days of said vacancy. Vacancies on the HCDEC shall not be filled by action of the HCDEC within the period from the time the HCDEC Chair position is declared vacant until the election of a new HCDEC Chair to replace the previous holder of that office. In the event that a vacancy in the office of the HCDEC Chair is filled by a person of the same sex as the HCDEC Vice-Chair, or vice versa, the requirement that they be of the opposite sex shall be waived for the unexpired term. (FDP Bylaws Article V, Section 2.2)
- 2.2 Other Officer Vacancy: In the event of an officer vacancy other than the HCDEC chair, a meeting shall be held within forty-five (45) days, upon written notice to members of at least ten (10) days, to elect a new officer. The HCDEC chair may appoint an interim officer until an election can take place.
- 2.3 Seeking Office Any officer wishing to seek another office position shall not be required to surrender his or her office while campaigning for that office.

Section 3. Temporary Leave

- 3.1 Mandatory Any officer of the HCDEC seeking the Democratic nomination for public office shall take a leave of absence from the HCDEC office commencing at the time of opening a campaign account for said public office and extending for the duration of the campaign. The vacancy created shall be filled by the HCDEC for the interim period. (FDP Bylaws Article V, Section 2.3)
- 3.2 Elective Any officer of the HCDEC may take a leave of absence for a period lasting no longer than six (6) months, due to medical, familial, business, or other emergencies deemed acceptable to the HCDEC. The duties of the absent officer may be delegated by the HCDEC chair to one or more HCDEC members as necessary.

Section 4. Removal from Office

- 4.1 Procedure An officer may be removed from office upon a two-thirds vote of the entire membership at a regular or special meeting provided that there shall have been at least ten days written notice of the purpose of said meeting. Such removal shall be for cause including, but not limited to malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, incompetence, permanent inability to perform official duties, conviction of a felony, or moral turpitude.

Section 5. Duties of the Chair

- 5.1 Preside. The Chair shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the HCDEC, and of the Steering Committee, and, where applicable, the Grievance Committee and the Certification Committee.
- 5.2 Standing Committees The Chair shall appoint the Chairs of all Standing Committees from among the HCDEC membership, and shall serve as a member ex officio of each Standing Committee, and may remove the Chair of any Standing Committee at any time.
- 5.3 Special Committees The Chair may appoint Special Committees as needed for special purposes, or as directed by the Florida Democratic Party or Florida Statutes. The Chair shall appoint the Chairs of all Special Committees from among the HCDEC membership, and shall serve as a member ex officio of each Special Committee. The Chair may remove the Chair of any Special Committee at any time.
- 5.4 Appointments The Chair shall appoint a Parliamentarian, and additional representatives wherever special functions must be carried out. The Steering Committee shall determine the duties of all such representatives, and such duties shall not conflict with any of the duties of the Officers enumerated in the HCDEC Bylaws.
- 5.5 Special Meetings The Chair shall advise the Secretary of all special meetings in sufficient time that required notices might be given, as proscribed by these Bylaws, to the membership.

5.6 Public Relations The Chair shall serve as the official spokesperson for the HCDEC, or appoint a member who shall do so as needed. The Chair shall approve all public dissemination of materials and correspondence bearing the name, symbols, logo, or other branding of the HCDEC, and may delegate such authority as on an individual basis.

5.7 Liaison The Chair shall act as liaison between other DEC Chairs in politically contiguous counties at least annually, and shall report to the HCDEC on matters of import.

5.8 Organization The Chair shall ensure the implementation of organizational infrastructure needed to carry out the campaign and compliance responsibilities of the HCDEC, and the maintenance of the integrity and security of HCDEC and FDP assets.

Section 6. Duties of the Vice-Chair

6.1 Assumption The Vice-Chair shall act during the absence or inability of the Chair to carry out all duties assigned above. When acting in the place of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall have all the powers and be subject to all the responsibilities given to, or imposed upon, the Chair.

6.2 Committees The Vice-Chair shall serve as a member ex officio of all Standing Committees and all Special Committees.

6.3 Other Duties The Vice-Chair shall perform such other duties as the Chair shall direct.

Section 7. Duties of the Secretary

7.1 Recordkeeping The secretary shall be responsible to the Chair for the complete and timely reporting of the activities of the HCDEC. Minutes shall be kept of all meetings and shall be presented at the next meeting for approval. Copies shall be sent to the State Chair within twenty (20) days following such meetings.

7.2 Credentials The Secretary shall maintain a current membership list at the time of each special and general meeting, including proxy statements, to verify those present and voting as members, or proxies for members. The Secretary shall determine that any person seeking membership in the HCDEC meets the prerequisites of membership in accordance with these Bylaws, and guide such persons through the application process.

7.3 Notices The Secretary shall provide all regular notices to the membership and to the public regarding meetings and other regular business conducted by the HCDEC.

7.4 Reading of the Minutes The Secretary shall read the minutes of the previous meeting in full before the membership for approval, correction, and adoption as the official record of that meeting. If such minutes are distributed to the members via U.S. Mail, or email, prior to each HCDEC meeting, the Chair may waive a reading of the minutes.

7.5 Attendance The Secretary shall call the roll of members at each HCDEC meeting and verify to the Chair that a minimum of twenty five percent (25%) is present to establish a quorum. The Secretary shall keep a permanent attendance record and have it available at each meeting.

7.6 Other Duties The Secretary shall perform such other duties as the Chair shall direct.

Section 8. Duties of the Treasurer

8.1 Banking The Treasurer shall establish and administer the account(s) of the HCDEC, and document for audit the deposit and distribution of funds from that account(s). Funds shall be kept on deposit in the name of the HCDEC or in the name of a committee, campaign, or special fund as the case may be. The Treasurer or his designates may deposit funds to the credit of a committee or special fund as may be necessary. The designates are the HCDEC Chair, or, in the Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair. Funds may be disbursed by bank draft or check drawn by the Treasurer or his designates. For purposes of these rules, electronic wire transfers, debit card, or credit card purchases shall be treated the same as checks.

8.2 Records and Receipts The Treasurer shall keep a record of all deposits, receipts and expenditures. The Treasurer shall issue reports at all general meetings of the HCDEC, and shall submit to the Supervisor of Elections all financial reports and filings as required by Florida Statute.

8.3 Commitments The Treasurer shall promptly pay such bills and obligations as are approved by the Chair, Steering Committee, or HCDEC as applicable.

8.4 Budget The Treasurer shall, with the advice and consent of the Steering Committee, prepare budgets for raising and disbursement of HCDEC funds for review and approval by the HCDEC. The fiscal year shall be the same as the calendar year. Said budget shall be distributed to all members of the HCDEC 60 days following the end of the fiscal year. Upon approval of the budget by the HCDEC membership, the Treasurer and designates shall be authorized to expend funds consistent therein. The Treasurer and designates are not authorized to expend more than three hundred dollars (\$300) on any non-budgeted item without the prior approval of the Steering Committee. The budget may be modified at any time by a simple majority vote of the HCDEC.

8.5 Audit The Treasurer shall arrange for the annual audit of the financial condition of the HCDEC in accordance with Article I, Section 3.4 of these Bylaws.

8.6 Transference The Treasurer shall arrange for the proper transfer and execution of accounts upon the change of office of the Chair or Treasurer.

8.7 Other Duties The Treasurer shall perform such other duties as the Chair shall direct.

9. Duties of the State Committeepersons

- 9.1 Liaison The duties of the State Committeepersons are to serve as liaison between the FDP and the HCDEC; liaison between the HCDEC and duly chartered Democratic Clubs; and members of the State Executive Committee and the HCDEC Steering Committee.
- 9.2 Communication The State Committeepersons shall facilitate communication between the FDP and HCDEC; take issues from the HCDEC to the FDP; report FDP business to the HCDEC; and keep the HCDEC informed of all changes made in the Charter and Bylaws of the FDP.
- 9.3 Representation The State Committeepersons shall attend all meetings of the FDP State Executive Committee and the Congressional District Committee as well as any other meetings of committees of which they are members, and reflect, to the best of their knowledge, the wishes of the HCDEC in all votes cast. When attendance is not possible, the State Committeeperson shall obtain a proxy.
- 9.4 Other Duties The State Committeepersons shall perform such other duties as the Chair shall direct.

ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS

Section I. Organizational Meetings

- 1.1 Basis The HCDEC shall hold an organizational meeting, called by the HCDEC Chair of the preceding committee, within thirty (30) days after said committee members take office. (FDP Bylaws Article V, Section 3.2)
- 1.2 Agenda The organizational meeting shall be called to order by the HCDEC chair, who shall preside over the meeting until the election of the new chair, who shall preside thereafter. The order of business shall be as follows: (1) Moment of Silence (2) Pledge of Allegiance (3) Roll Call (4) Credentials Report (5) Election of Chair (6) Election of State Committeeperson(s) (7) Election of Vice Chair (8) Election of Secretary (9) Election of Treasurer (10) Election of Any Other Officers. (FDP Bylaws Article V, section 3.2.1)

Section 2. Regular and Special Meetings

- 2.1 Regular Meetings The HCDEC shall hold regular meetings on a monthly basis. The HCDEC may reduce the number of meetings by a majority vote, providing that the meetings are held no less than quarterly, and that this schedule is affirmed quarterly. The date, time or place of these meetings may be changed with proper written notice to members of the HCDEC, at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting.

- 2.2 Special Meetings The HCDEC chair may call additional meetings for the good of the HCDEC, provided that proper written notice is provided to all members of the HCDEC, at least seven (7) days prior to any such meeting that they are required to attend.

Section 3. Policies

- 3.1 Quorum No official business shall be conducted unless a quorum is present. The quorum requirement for the HCDEC shall be twenty-five percent (25%) of the total membership.
- 3.2 Accessibility All HCDEC meetings shall be held in facilities that are accessible to the physically disabled.
- 3.3 Voting Votes at all HCDEC meetings shall be one (1) vote per member.
- 3.4 Presence Voting on all motions or matters presented to the HCDEC shall take place in person or by proxy at a regular or special meeting.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES

Section 1. Standing Committees

- 1.1 Membership The membership of Standing Committees may consist of any registered Democrat who is a resident of Hernando County, as determined by the Secretary. HCDEC Members shall be appointed to committees by the Committee Chair, subject to overruling by the HCDEC Chair. Democrats who are not members of the HCDEC may be appointed by the HCDEC Chair, subject to overruling by the HCDEC. The HCDEC Chair or Committee Chair may remove members from Special Committees at their discretion.
- 1.2 Diversity and Inclusion Committee The Hernando DEC values diversity and an inclusive environment. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee shall work in conjunction with the FDP Diversity and Inclusion Committee to further the goals and policies of the Democratic Party. (FDP Bylaws ArticleV, Section 5.1.1) The Hernando DEC values diversity and an inclusive environment.
- 1.3 Youth Engagement Committee The Youth Engagement Committee shall encourage young people, as defined by FDP, to participate in the political process and the Democratic Party, in partnership with the Florida Young Democrats.

Section 2. Special Committees

- 2.1 Appointment The Chair shall determine the need for, and shall establish and appoint the Chair of, any Special Committee deemed to be necessary to accomplish the declared purposes of the HCDEC.

- 2.2 Membership The membership of Special Committees may consist of any registered Democrat who is a resident of Hernando County, as determined by the Secretary. HCDEC Members shall be appointed to committees by the Committee Chair, subject to approval by the HCDEC Chair. Democrats who are not members of the HCDEC may be appointed by the HCDEC Chair, with the advice and consent of the Committee Chair. The HCDEC Chair or Committee Chair may remove members from Special Committees at their discretion.
- 2.3 Nomenclature The absence of the word “committee” from the titular designation of a Special Committee shall not preclude it being subject to any provision governing Special Committees.

Section 3. Steering Committee

- 3.1 Membership The Steering Committee shall be comprised of all current officers of the HCDEC. At the invitation of the Chair, other registered Democrats may attend meetings of the Steering Committee to offer counsel.
- 3.2 Function The Steering Committee shall meet prior to the general meeting to set the HCDEC meeting agenda, at the discretion of the Chair, and coordinate and support the activities of the HCDEC and its chartered organizations. In the event of emergency business for the HCDEC, the Steering Committee shall have authority to act until such time as a meeting of the HCDEC can be held.
- 3.3 Voting Each member of the Steering Committee shall have one (1) vote.
- (a) The quorum for voting at an in-person Steering Committee meeting shall be at least forty percent (40%) of its membership.
 - (b) The Steering Committee may, as a courtesy, make arrangements for its members to remotely participate in in-person meetings; members so participating may be counted for a quorum and cast their votes as normal.
 - (c) The Steering Committee may take votes on routine matters via digital communications in which all members are included. Such matters are subject to review at the next in-person meeting of the Committee. A vote shall pass if a simple majority is reached within 72 hours; if the 72 hours expires without a majority, it shall fail, and thereafter may only be voted upon in person. The quorum requirement shall be waived for such votes.

Section 4. Grievance Committee

4.1 Function The Grievance Committee consisting of the Chair, State Committee persons of the HCDEC and chaired by the HCDEC Chair may resolve disputes and grievances involving Democratic Clubs. If one person shall hold two of these offices, then the Vice-Chair shall also be a member. Should one person holding one of these offices be directly involved in the dispute or grievance, the Vice-Chair of the HCDEC shall also be involved in said resolution. Such resolution may be appealed to the HCDEC whose decision shall be final unless appealed to the FDP Judicial Council no later than forty-five (45) days from the date of said decision.