

Rules for the Selection of Democratic Candidates and Nominees for Public Office

As approved by the Washington State Democratic Central Committee on
September 26, 2009

- I. **Applicability.** These Rules shall apply to the selection of any candidate or nominee for public office who intends to be, or is, associated with the Democratic Party, directly or indirectly, on any ballot used in a publicly financed election or candidate selection process.
- II. **Exclusive Means of Selection.** Candidates and nominees of the Democratic Party for public office must be selected by one of the means specified in these Rules.
- III. **Democratic Primary.** Where State law provides for a public primary that complies with these Rules (hereinafter a "Democratic Primary"), candidates and nominees shall be selected by means of that Democratic Primary; provided that in the event of a vacancy on the Democratic ticket, the State Chair may fill the vacancy as specified in State law and applicable Party rules.
- IV. **Rules Governing Democratic Primaries.** A public primary must comply with the following rules in order to qualify as a Democratic Primary where candidates or nominees will be selected by means of the primary:
- A. **Separate Democratic Ballot Required.** All Democratic Primaries occurring on a single date shall appear on the same ballot. The ballot provided to voters in the Democratic Primaries may not contain the names of any candidate for office who is affiliated with any other political party, or of no political party, except that the State may provide to voters a ballot that may be simultaneously used in the Democratic Primaries and in primaries for offices in which no candidate's name is associated with any political party or persuasion, and in such case the ballot may contain the names of all candidates for such offices.
- B. **Opportunity to Join or Confirm Membership in the Party Must be Provided.** Voters participating in the Democratic Primary must be offered the opportunity to publicly affiliate with the Democratic Party but public affiliation with the Party shall not be a requirement of participation in the Democratic Primary unless such public affiliation is required by law. As a condition of participating in the Democratic Primary, voters must either publicly affiliate with the Democratic Party or publicly indicate that they are not affiliated with any political party.

1 **C. Voter Participation is Public Record.** The participation of any voter in the
2 Democratic Primary shall be a public record to the extent necessary to verify
3 that only voters eligible under party rules receive a Democratic ballot and, in
4 addition, the choice by any voter whether to voluntarily affiliate with the
5 Democratic Party at the Democratic Primary or to declare a lack of affiliation
6 with any political party shall be a public record.
7

8 **D. A Statewide System of Voluntary Voter Registration by Party** which allows
9 voters to publicly affiliate with the Democratic Party shall satisfy the
10 requirements of Subparagraph B, of this paragraph.
11

12 **V. Alternative Means of Selection.** Where State law does not provide for a Democratic
13 Primary that complies with these Rules, candidates and nominees shall be selected in
14 accordance with the following rules, provided that in the event of a vacancy on the
15 Democratic ticket, the State Chair may fill the vacancy as provided by State law and
16 other applicable Party rules.
17

18 **A. Authorization Required.** No candidate for public office may campaign as a
19 Democratic candidate except as authorized pursuant to these Rules. No
20 candidate for public office may be designated, nor permit him or herself to be
21 designated, as the Democratic nominee for any public office unless such
22 candidate has been designated by the Washington State Democratic Party as a
23 Democratic nominee pursuant to this Rule.
24

25 **B. Nomination Process**
26

27 **1. County Partisan Office Nominees.** The nominees for county partisan
28 office shall be chosen at a county nominating convention or optionally
29 at county council district nominating conventions, consisting of elected
30 and appointed precinct committee officers representing precincts in
31 that county or council district. Such nominating conventions shall be
32 called by the Chair of the County Democratic Party not later than 45
33 days and held not less than 14 days prior to the date filing for office
34 commences. The results from each nominating convention shall be
35 reported to the Chair of the Washington State Democratic Party within
36 24 hours after the convention has adjourned.
37

38 **2. Legislative Nominees.** The nominees for Washington State Senate and
39 Washington State House of Representatives shall be chosen at a
40 legislative district nominating convention consisting of elected and
41 appointed precinct committee officers representing precincts in that
42 legislative district. Such nominating conventions shall be called by the
43 Chair of the Legislative District Democratic Party not later than 45 days

1 and held not less than 14 days prior to the date filing for office
2 commences. The results from each nominating convention shall be
3 reported to the Chair of the Washington State Democratic Party within
4 24 hours after the convention has adjourned.
5

6 **3. Majority Vote Required.** The candidate of the Democratic Party shall
7 be the candidate who receives a majority vote of weighted ballots. If no
8 candidate receives a majority of the first ballot, the candidate receiving
9 the least number of votes shall be dropped from each successive ballot
10 until a candidate receives a majority. In the event of a tie in
11 determining which candidate shall be dropped, the candidate shall be
12 chosen by lot.
13

14 **4. Failure to Call or Nominate.** If any County or Legislative District Chair
15 fails to call a nominating convention as required by subparagraphs 1 or
16 2, the Chair of the Washington State Democratic Party shall issue the
17 call or fill any vacancy created by the failure of the County or
18 Legislative District Chair to issue a call. In any case where the
19 appropriate convention has failed to designate a nominee, the nominee
20 will be designated by the Democratic State Central Committee acting
21 through its Chair.
22

23 **5. Statewide and Congressional Nominees.** The nominees for all
24 statewide partisan elected offices (Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of
25 State, Treasurer, Auditor, Attorney General, Insurance Commissioner,
26 and Public Lands Commissioner) shall be selected at the Democratic
27 State Convention in accordance with the rules for the Convention.
28 Nominees for United States House of Representatives shall be selected
29 by the State Central Committee. Congressional District Caucuses of
30 those State Central Committee Members that reside in the
31 Congressional District under consideration shall nominate a candidate.
32 The selection of the nominees from each Congressional District shall be
33 subject to a vote of affirmation by the State Central Committee in
34 accordance with the rules of the State Central Committee. If a majority
35 present and voting at the State Central Committee does not vote to
36 affirm a selection by a Congressional District Caucus, or a Caucus does
37 not select a nominee, then the nominee shall be selected by the State
38 Central Committee in accordance with the rules of the State Central
39 Committee.
40
41
42

- 1 a. The procedures set forth in subparagraph 5 may be delegated in
2 whole or in part by a vote of those entitled to vote to the
3 Washington State Democratic Central Committee.
4
- 5 **6. Rules for Balloting.** Each candidate or the candidate's representative
6 shall be entitled to address the convention or meeting for not less than
7 two minutes, or longer if provided for under rules adopted to govern
8 the convention. Each delegate shall vote by signed ballot for no more
9 than one candidate for each office for which nominations are sought.
10 The results shall be tallied and reported to the Chair. The convention
11 may dispense with balloting and nominate by acclamation for any
12 office in which a single candidate is seeking nomination.
13
- 14 **7. Weighted Voting.** The number of votes at each nominating convention
15 other than the state convention shall be equal to the sum of the number
16 of precinct level delegates that were allocated to the precincts that are
17 represented at the convention during the most recent National Delegate
18 Selection process. Each elected or appointed PCO voting at the caucus
19 or convention shall be apportioned the number of votes equal to the
20 number of precinct level delegates his or her precinct was allotted
21 during the most recent National Delegate Selection process. In the case
22 of newly formulated precincts the calculation would be based on the
23 allocation formula used in the most recent delegate selection plan.
24 **8.** These rules are mandatory and are not amendable by any party
25 organization other than the Washington State Democratic Central
26 Committee or the State Convention.
27
- 28 **9. State Chair to Notify Election Officials.** To the extent required by law
29 or appropriate, the State Chair shall submit to state and local election
30 officials the names of those candidates authorized to campaign as
31 Democratic candidates and those candidates designated as Democratic
32 nominees.
33
- 34 **C. Vacancy on Ticket.** A vacancy caused by the death or disqualification of
35 nominee of the Democratic Party may be filled at any time up to and
36 including the day prior to the election for that position. For state partisan
37 offices in any political subdivision voted on solely by electors of a single
38 county, an individual shall be appointed to fill such vacancy by the relevant
39 Democratic County Central Committee. For all other partisan offices,
40 including federal or statewide offices, an individual shall be appointed to fill
41 such vacancy by the Washington State Democratic Central Committee. The
42 authority granted under this section may be delegated by the County or State
43 Democratic Central Committee to its Executive Board or Chair.

1 **D.** As a threshold of support for election under this Rule, a registered voter must
2 have either (1) received a vote of approval of 25% of those present and voting
3 at a meeting of the Democratic Party organization under the charter for the
4 jurisdiction represented by the office sought or (2) at the time of filing the
5 declaration of candidacy required by law submitted a nominating petition
6 signed by at least 5% of those voters who at the time of signing are voters in
7 the jurisdiction and registered with the Democratic Party or (3) at the time of
8 filing the declaration of candidacy required by law submitted a nominating
9 petition signed by at least 25% of the elected and appointed Democratic
10 Precinct Committee Officers represented precincts within the jurisdiction
11 represented by the office sought and who held such office as of the last
12 meeting of the Democratic party organization for the jurisdiction.
13

14 **VI. Threshold demonstration of Party support required.** Any registered voter in the
15 State of Washington is eligible for selection as a candidate or nominee of the
16 Democratic Party for any public office provided:
17

18 **A.** The voter must publicly attest his or her support of the Democratic Party and
19 his or her desire to be publicly known as a Democrat; and
20

21 **B.** The voter must be otherwise eligible under state law for election to the office
22 sought; and
23

24 **C.** The voter must not have been registered as a member of any political party
25 other than the Democratic Party for at least one (1) year immediately
26 preceding filing for office.
27

28 **VII. Decision of Executive Board Final.** The decision of the executive board with respect
29 to any question of interpretation of these rules is final
30

31
32 Passed as amended by the WSDCC Elections Committee at its September 13, 2009 meeting
33 in Kent, WA.

34
35 Passed as amended by the WSDCC Rules Committee at its September 13, 2009 meeting in
36 Kent, WA.

37
38 Passed as amended by the WSDCC at its September 26, 2009 meeting in Walla Walla, WA.