



## **Bylaws of the Stonewall Democrats of Pinellas County**

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### **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of this organization is the **Stonewall Democrats of Pinellas County** (herein referred to as SDPC). The SDPC is a not-for-profit political committee that is organized as a chartered Chapter of the Florida Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer+ (LGBTQ+) Democratic Caucus.

### **ARTICLE II. MISSION STATEMENT**

Stonewall Democrats of Pinellas County is devoted to advancing equal rights for all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. As a Democratic organization, SDPC will work with the Democratic Party and support fair-minded Democratic leaders and candidates who support our mission. Our organization's strength comes from Pinellas County lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer+ (LGBTQ+), and allied Democrats working together to achieve the following goals:

1. Stimulating active interest in political and governmental affairs among the LGBTQ+ community and our allies;
2. Educating the LGBTQ+ community about issues that directly affect the quality of our lives. In addition, we want to educate the gay community and our allies about the vast differences between the two major parties on issues of concern to the LGBTQ+ community;
3. Supporting and participating in Democratic Party activities and working within the Party to help strengthen its record on issues important to the LGBTQ+ community – including standing against bigotry and intolerance, and advancing the prominence of openly LGBTQ+ people within the Democratic Party;
4. Supporting and electing Democratic candidates and Party nominees who are committed to defeating homophobia and prejudice at the local, state and national levels.
5. Electing qualified openly LGBTQ+ people to public office, and as convention delegates, and to achieve appointments of openly LGBTQ+ people to city and county boards and commissions in Pinellas County;
6. Fostering good will, cooperation, and collaboration between LGBTQ+ Democrats, our allies, the Democratic Party, other progressive organizations in the area, and with the community at large;
7. Registering voters who support the mission of our organization and encouraging their participation in the electoral process;
8. Achieving diversity in our Chapter's membership and its governing bodies; and

Providing support to the Florida LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus, and to the Pinellas County Democratic Executive Committee.

**ARTICLE III. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROVISIONS**

The SDPC hereby adopts and shall enforce the following anti-discrimination provisions:

1. No Democratic Loyalty Oath should be used which has the effect of requiring members of the Democratic Party to condone or support discrimination on the grounds of race, color, creed, sex, age, religion, economic status, ethnic identity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.
2. The time and place for all public meetings of the SDPC should be publicized fully in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons, and should be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of race, color, creed, sex, age, religion, economic status, ethnic identity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.
3. In order to fully and adequately inform prospective and current members of a full description of the legal, practical and pertinent procedures for selection of all SDPC officers, committee chairs or other representatives, the chapter should publicize fully, and in such a manner, as to assure notice to all interested Democrats in time to have adequate opportunity to participate.

**ARTICLE IV. ENDORSEMENTS**

1. At no time, will this Chapter support any non-Democrat against a Democrat in any election, other than in judicial elections.
2. In all statewide and federal primaries, elections, or runoffs, whether partisan or non-partisan, where more than one Democrat is running for the same public office, the Chapter shall follow the endorsement or specific non-endorsement of the Florida LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus.
3. In other primaries, elections, or runoffs, whether partisan or non-partisan, where more than one Democrat is running for the same public office within the geographic area of the Chapter, the Chapter may endorse (i.e., endorse, certify, screen, or recommend, in any manner) and support a candidate.
4. No such endorsement shall be made prior to the close of the candidate-qualifying period.
5. Prior to being eligible to endorse, (a) at least 80% of Executive Committee positions shall be filled, (b) the general membership shall have held at least two meetings at which a quorum was present during the previous 12 months, and (c) the Executive Committee shall have held at least three meetings at which a quorum was present during the previous 12 months.
6. A supermajority vote of more than 2/3 of the Chapter members present and voting shall be required to endorse candidates seeking elective office.
7. Endorsements of candidates seeking support for election/selection to Democratic Party bodies, or to any other commission, board or organization shall not be considered endorsements subject to supermajority rules, but shall be subject to general rules governing motions.

**ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATION**

1. Eligibility for Membership -- Any Democrat registered to vote in Pinellas County, or a county contiguous to Pinellas, who is supportive of the mission of this Chapter shall be eligible for Chapter membership. No other residency restriction will be placed on membership or the privileges of membership. In accordance with Article VI of the Florida Democratic Party Bylaws, with the exception of the organizational meeting of this Chapter, those members permitted to vote in any Chapter election for officers must have been a member of the Chapter at least 45 days prior to the date of such election. Membership will become immediately effective upon the payment of dues and verification of Democratic Party affiliation to the extent practicable. Questions

pertaining to eligibility shall be determined by the full membership upon the recommendation of the Membership Committee.

2. Affiliated Members

- A. Any Democrat or individual without a Party affiliation, who is registered to vote in Pinellas County and who is supportive of the mission of this Chapter may choose to join as an associate member.
- B. Any Democrat or individual without a Party affiliation, who is registered to vote outside of Pinellas County or who is not able to register to vote in Florida and who is supportive of the mission of this Chapter shall be eligible to be an associate member, upon payment of dues specified by the Chapter.
- C. Associate members of the SDPC may participate in the activities of the Chapter, may be appointed to committees, and may attend and speak at meetings, but shall not be eligible to make motions, vote, or hold Chapter office. Associate membership will be effective immediately upon the payment of dues.
- D. Professional Membership with the SDPC is offered for businesses and professional who wish to establish a professional relationship with the chapter and meet criteria described in the Standing Rules.

3. Dues

- A. Dues shall entitle individuals to membership in the Chapter (as either a voting member or an associate member). The Chapter shall determine the annual dues of each category of membership or affiliation as part of the Standing Rules. Annual dues are payable to the Treasurer on or before December 31 for the ensuing year, or at the time of becoming a member for the remainder of that calendar year. New/Non-previous members who renew their membership for the first time are eligible for pro-rated dues based when they joined the previous year, calculated on a quarterly basis. Dues paid between November 1 and December 31 by new/non-previous members shall be deemed for the current and ensuing year.
- B. By January 31 of each year, members whose dues are 30 days in arrears shall be notified by the Chapter. Those members whose dues are not paid by March 1 shall be automatically placed in inactive status and shall not be considered members.

4. Responsibilities of Voting Members -- The duties of the voting members of the SDPC are as follows:

- A. To annually evaluate, recommend and approve -- as considered appropriate by the Chapter's Voting Members -- any mission statement, program, goals, and/or plan of operation for the SDPC as recommended by or through the Executive Committee;
- B. To establish policies governing the operation of the SDPC, its officers, and the Executive Committee;
- C. To attend the regularly scheduled SDPC meetings to advise, counsel, suggest, debate, and participate in the decision-making process with respect to the mission, program, goals and plan of operation for the SDPC;
- D. To execute, fulfill, complete, and satisfy, to the best of her/his ability, any task, charge, assignment, duty, or responsibility assigned to him/her by the President or the Executive Committee or their appointed designee or agent;
- E. To nominate and select the Chapter officers;
- F. To support, financially or by volunteering, any by voting for, candidates endorsed by SDPC.

5. Resignation from Membership -- Members desiring to resign from the Chapter shall submit their resignation in writing to the Secretary or the President. Dues will not be refunded.
6. Membership Lists -- The membership list of the SDPC shall be confidential and shall not be delivered or disclosed to any member or any other person unless authorized by the Executive Committee or the general membership. Nothing herein shall restrict the use of the membership list for mailing purposes by the SDPC or for such other purposes or by any other person or entity so long as the Executive Committee or the general membership approves of such use by a two-thirds vote and adequate provisions are made to ensure the security and integrity of the list.

#### **ARTICLE VI. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

1. Regular Meetings -- Regular general membership meetings of the SDPC shall be held once a month, unless otherwise determined by a vote of the general membership.
2. Special Meetings -- Special meetings may be called by the President or by a majority of the Executive Committee. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call to the meeting. Except in the case of an emergency, at least seven days notice shall be given.
3. Quorum and Voting
  - A. Twenty percent (20%) of the Chapter's voting membership shall constitute a quorum. Without a quorum, no action may be taken by the membership. No proxies shall be permitted in voting at any time and votes may be taken by secret ballot. Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, a majority vote is required to approve motions. Voting may be conducted electronically, as long as a quorum is met based on the number of members responding.
  - B. In accordance with Article VI of the Florida Democratic Party Bylaws, with the exception of the Chapter's organizational meeting, only those individuals who have been members for at least 45 days may be permitted to vote in any Chapter election for officer(s). In addition, only those persons who have been members for at least 45 days may be permitted to vote in Chapter endorsements for candidates for public office, or amendments to the Chapter's Bylaws. Votes on all other matters may be cast by all members in good standing.
4. Meetings Open to All Democrats -- The time and place for all regular and special meetings of the Chapter shall be publicized fully and in such a manner as to assure timely notice to all interested persons. Meetings shall be open to all members of the Democratic Party regardless of sex, race, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, ethnic identity, or disability. All meetings shall be in a facility accessible to people with disabilities.

#### **ARTICLE VII. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

1. Composition -- The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected officers and the chairs of the standing committees. The immediate past president (if applicable) shall be an ex-officio member. The members of the Executive Committee must be members in good standing of the Stonewall Democrats of Pinellas County.
2. Duties and Powers -- The Executive Committee is responsible for the conduct of the affairs of the SDPC in the interim between meetings of the general membership, subject to these Bylaws and the Standing Rules. It will assist the President in the preparation of the agenda for each meeting, provide guidance to the membership in the deliberations of the Chapter, and carry out the instructions of the Chapter's membership. The Committee may also be responsible for developing, reviewing and implementing a long-range plan for the Chapter. This body has general fiduciary responsibility for the Chapter's financial records and may have the Chapter's financial records reviewed each fiscal year and may appoint a public accountant for this purpose.

3. Meetings -- Unless otherwise determined by the Executive Committee, the Committee shall meet prior to each general meeting at a time and a place specified by the President. Special meetings of the Committee may be called by the President and shall be called, within seven days, upon the written request of five members of the Committee.
4. Quorum and Voting -- A majority of the members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum. Proxies will not be allowed at Executive Committee meetings and votes shall not be taken by secret ballot. No one member of the Executive Committee shall have more than one vote, even if qualified by more than one criterion.

#### **ARTICLE VIII. OFFICERS**

1. Officers -- The elected officers of the Chapter shall be a President, a Vice President for Political Action, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.
2. Duties of Officers -- The duties of the elected officers shall be as follows:
  - A. **President** -- The President shall: preside at all meetings of the Chapter and the Executive Committee; provide guidance to all committees; nominate all standing and special committee chairs and appoint the committee members (unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws); appoint other ex-officio non-voting officers as may be needed to assist in the conduct of the meetings; represent the Chapter at county, district, state, and national meetings and functions (or appoint a designee); act as primary spokesperson for the Chapter; and serve as chief executive and administrative officer, with the power to sign all contracts and other instruments of the SDPC which are authorized by the Executive Committee.
  - B. **Vice President for Political Action** -- The Vice President for Political Action shall: in the absence of the president, chair the Executive Committee and membership meetings; be responsible for planning and implementing the political activities of the Chapter; and chair the Elections Committee.
  - C. **Secretary** -- The Secretary shall: provide members with notice of meetings, proposed Bylaws changes, and other procedural business; maintain a record of all meetings of the Executive Committee and general membership; maintain all records of the Chapter (except as otherwise assigned by these Bylaws) including, but not limited to, meeting minutes, committee reports, the official membership roll, committee lists, the Bylaws and Standing Rules; and coordinate with the Treasurer and Membership Committee Chair on correspondence with members regarding the payment of membership renewal dues.
  - D. **Treasurer** -- The Treasurer shall: serve as the custodian of all funds of the Chapter; be responsible for keeping an accurate record of receipts and expenditures and presenting a current statement of income and all expenditures at each Executive Committee meeting and as requested by the Executive Committee; present a report at each general membership meetings; disburse funds only as authorized by the Executive Committee or the general membership; and appoint, with the approval of the Executive Committee, deputies to receive and account for Chapter funds, if needed. The Chapter's financial records shall be available for review by any voting Chapter member upon reasonable request. Checks shall be signed jointly by the Treasurer and the President (or the Vice President for Political Action in the absence of the President).
3. Term of Office -- The Chapter's officers shall be elected to serve for one year or until their successors are elected. Election of officers shall be at the organizational meeting and thereafter at the February general membership meeting. Subsequent elections may be staggered in accordance with provisions of these Bylaws. Nominations shall be accepted from the floor, and voting may be by secret ballot. Officers shall be permitted to be elected to consecutive terms. Elected officers should be equally divided by gender, as practicable. In the election of officers (and the appointment of all Chapter offices and committees), consideration should be given to gender, racial, ethnic and other diversity characteristics to reflect the membership and the local LGBTQ+ community to the extent possible.

4. Office-Holding Limitations -- No member shall hold more than one elected office at a time.
5. Opportunity to Participate -- The Chapter shall publicize fully the legal, practical, and pertinent procedures for selection of the Chapter's representatives and officers; such publication shall be timely to assure notice to all interested Democrats, whether members or prospective members, such that they may have adequate opportunity to participate.
6. Loyalty Oath -- Chapter officers shall execute a loyalty oath, in the form and manner prescribed by the rules of the Florida Democratic Party, immediately upon taking office, or as soon thereafter as possible (within 30 days), and before discharge of their duties. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, failure to comply shall result in immediate removal from office.
7. Maintenance of Membership -- All officers are required to be current dues paying voting Chapter members. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, failure to comply shall result in immediate removal from office.
8. Organization Records -- All records created and maintained by Chapter officers in the discharge of their duties shall be the exclusive property of the Chapter. Officers shall be custodians of such records during their term of office and shall physically present them within 30 days of the conclusion of their term (or upon the election of their successor) to ensure the smooth transfer of office to their successor.
9. Vacancies and Removal
  - A. In the absence of or disability of the President, the Vice President for Political Action shall assume the duties of the President. If the President resigns, he/she shall act as President until a permanent President is elected. In the absence of the Vice President of Political Action, the role shall be filled by the Treasurer.
  - B. Other vacancies shall be filled, on an acting basis, by appointment of the President, until the next regular meeting of the Chapter, provided that at-least 10 days notice is given of the vacancy, at which time the position will be filled for the remainder of the term, by nominations from the floor.
  - C. Removal of an officer from office before the end of the term shall be for cause (including neglect of duty) and shall be considered at any general meeting by a two-thirds vote of those present who are members in good standing, providing notification of such pending action has been distributed to the membership at least two weeks in advance.

#### **ARTICLE IX. STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. Committees
  - A. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the President shall nominate the standing committee chairs (or co-chairs) and appoint the members, in consultation with the Executive Committee, subject to ratification by the general membership. Chairs of Standing Committees shall sit on the Executive Committee.
  - B. The standing committees shall be as follows: Bylaws Committee, Fundraising Committee, Membership Committee, Media & Marketing Committee, Elections Committee, Program Committee, Publications Committee, and Special Events Committee. Committees and functions may be combined upon approval of the general membership.

2. Functions -- The functions of the standing committees shall be as follows:

- A. **Bylaws Committee** -- This body shall: receive and consider all proposals for changes to the Bylaws and to the Standing Rules and report its recommendation to the Executive Committee and the general membership; and conduct a continuing study of the Bylaws and Standing Rules and make periodic recommendations to the general membership for amendment.
- B. **Fundraising Committee** -- This committee is charged with the following responsibilities: plan and conduct an annual schedule of fundraising activities to provide funding for Chapter programs and activities in accordance with the Chapter's budget; and coordinate specific fundraising events for candidates endorsed by the SDPC.
- C. **Membership Committee** -- This body is charged with the following responsibilities: coordinate outreach and recruitment activities aimed at attracting new members; build a diverse membership with a broad representation of LGBTQ+ Democrats; coordinate with the Secretary and Treasurer on correspondence with members regarding membership renewal and dues payment; recommend rules and procedures relating to membership requirements and dues, including the manner and form of initial application, verification of Democratic Party registration, and renewals; and hear and recommend resolution to the Executive Committee on any dispute related to an individual's membership in the Chapter.
- D. **Public Relations Committee** -- This body is charged with the following responsibilities: generate positive media coverage of Chapter events, activities, positions, and successes; create and implement marketing strategies to promote awareness of the Chapter, enhance its image, and support the Chapter's projects, events and programs; communicate the Chapter's endorsements to the LGBTQ+ community in coordination with the Elections and Communications Committees; and maintain a permanent record of all publicity materials, especially those items published in print or used on broadcast.
- E. **Elections Committee** -- This committee is chaired by the Vice President for Political Action and is charged with the following responsibilities: Coordinate activities to maintain and enhance relations between the SDPC and elected officials, candidates for public office, local and state Democratic Party organizations and the Florida LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus; coordinate the Chapter's candidate review process, including distribution and collection of candidate questionnaires and coordination of candidate forums at Chapter meetings or special events; plan and implement the Chapter's political activities in support of campaigns; develop activities to increase lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender participation in public boards, commissions, and elective office; facilitate "get out the vote" activities during the course of each election cycle; coordinate mobilization of members; organize and coordinate voter registration campaigns; and conduct petition drives and public demonstrations, where appropriate, on issues of concern to the community.
- F. **Program Committee** -- This body is charged with the following responsibilities: conceive and coordinate programs for the Chapter's monthly membership meetings (with the approval of the Executive Board); coordinate set-up, tear-down, and refreshments for each monthly meeting; reserve meeting space for membership meetings; work with the Political Action Committee to coordinate candidate or ballot initiative forums; and work with the Publications and Media and Marketing Committees to ensure appropriate publicity about each meeting in the media and in the Chapter's newsletter.
- G. **Communications Committee** -- This body is charged with the following responsibilities: ensure that all Chapter activities, including meetings, are advertised in an appropriate and timely manner; produce and distribute the Chapter's monthly and special announcement emails; develop and maintain the Chapter's website; create printed and electronic information that promotes awareness of the Chapter, enhances its image, and supports its projects, events and programs; and maintain a record of printed materials produced to support Chapter activities.

- H. ***Special Events Committee*** -- This body is charged with the following responsibilities: Coordinate the Chapter's participation in Pride activities; coordinate the Chapter's participation in other special community events, including selecting appropriate events and developing goals and objectives for participating; and coordinate activities with the Fundraising Committee to ensure compatibility with Chapter goals and objectives regarding finances.
3. ***Other Committees*** -- The President shall appoint the chairs and members of other committees, standing or *ad hoc*, as the Executive Committee or general membership shall, from time to time, deem necessary to carry on the work of the Chapter.
4. ***Committee Records and Reports*** -- All records created and maintained by committees in the discharge of their duties shall be the exclusive property of the SDPC. All books and records of the SDPC may be inspected by any voting Chapter member upon reasonable request. Committee chairs shall be custodians of such records, shall make copies of all records for retention by the Secretary, and shall transfer all records to succeeding chairs within 30 days of the appointment of their successors. All committee reports requiring action at a membership meeting shall be in writing and should be previously presented to the Executive Committee.

#### **ARTICLE X. ACCOUNTING**

1. Expenditures will be made in accordance with a budget prepared by the Treasurer in consultation with the Executive Committee and approved by the membership.
2. The Chapter's fiscal year shall be the period from January 1 through December 31 of one calendar year.

#### **ARTICLE XI. MISCELLANEOUS**

1. ***Charter Recertification*** -- In July of every odd numbered year, or at such time as otherwise required by the Caucus or the State Party, the Chapter shall apply to the Membership and Chartering Committee of the Florida LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus for charter recertification. Failure to do so shall result in the forfeiture of all rights and privileges of the use of the word Democrat, Democratic, or derivative thereof.
2. ***Dissolution*** -- In the event the Chapter wishes to dissolve, a resolution stating the date of dissolution and reasons for the same shall be adopted by a majority vote at a regular general membership meeting, provided that such resolution is submitted in writing at the previous meeting. If the Chapter disbands for any reason, the assets and funds of the Chapter, after all debts are satisfied, shall become the property of the Florida LGBTQ Democratic Caucus.

#### **ARTICLE XII: INDEMNIFICATION OF MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

The SDPC will have the right to indemnify and hold harmless the voting members, the President, Secretary, Treasurer, each Vice President, and any other officers or standing committee chairs and their respective assistants designated by the Executive Committee to the full extent permitted by Florida law. The SDPC will have the power to purchase or procure insurance for such purpose at such time it is deemed necessary and sufficient funds are determined to be available for this purpose. This paragraph shall not apply to willful misconduct or gross negligence by any voting member, officer, assistant, or other designated person.

#### **ARTICLE XIII. STANDING RULES OF PROCEDURE**

Standing Rules for the Stonewall Democrats of Pinellas County shall be adopted to provide for the governance of the affairs of the Chapter in matters not provided for in these Bylaws.



**ARTICLE XV. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall govern the Chapter in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws or any other Chapter rules or procedures, the rules of the Florida LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus, the Florida Democratic Party and the National Democratic Party, and any statute applicable to this Chapter that do not authorize the provisions of these Bylaws to take precedence.

**ARTICLE XVI. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

1. Amendment Process -- These Bylaws may be amended at any regular general membership meeting by a two-thirds vote, provided that the text has been distributed to the membership at the previous meeting, and distributed via e-mail to the Chapter's membership e-mail list at least 10 days in advance. The Bylaws Committee shall review all proposed amendments to the Bylaws and report its recommendation in writing to the membership. Bylaws, and any changes or amendments thereto, together with copies of the minutes of the meeting at which such amendments were adopted, shall be filed with the Florida LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus within 30 days following adoption.
2. Effective Date -- All amendments shall be effective immediately, but shall be subject to the approval of the Florida LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus and the Florida Democratic Party Committee on Clubs, Organizations, and Caucuses. Any amendment or change, which is not approved, shall be deleted from the Bylaws. Actions taken pursuant to such non-approved amendment or changes shall be null and void.

**HISTORY**

These Bylaws were adopted on: February 9, 2006.

Subsequent Amendments:

- February 21, 2008
- February 18, 2016
- November 15, 2018
- August 7, 2019
- June 17, 2021
- August 31, 2025